THE PIONEERS:

A DESCRIPTIVE TALE.

VOL. II.

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THE

PIONEERS,

OR THE

SOURCES OF THE SUSQUEHANNA;

A DESCRIPTIVE TALE.

BY T[illegible] [illegible]THOR OF "THE SPY."

" Extremes of habits, manners, time and space,
Brought close together, here stood face to face,
And gave at once a contrast to the view,
That other lands and ages never knew."

Paulding.

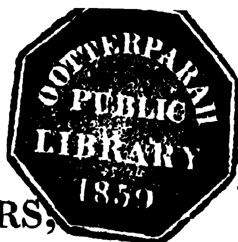
IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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1823.



THE PIONEERS,

OR THE

SOURCES OF THE SUSQUEHANNA.

CHAPTER I.

"And I'll drink out of the quart pot,
Here's a health to the barley mow."
Drinking Song.

On one of the corners, where the two principal streets of Templeton intersected each other, stood, as we have already mentioned, the inn, that was called the "Bold Dragoon." In the original plan of the village, it was ordained, that its site should stretch along the little stream, that rushed down the valley, and the street which led from the lake to the academy, was intended to be its western boundary. But convenience frequently frustrates the best regulated plans. Notwithstanding the house of Mr., or as, in conse-

quence of commanding the militia of that vicinity, he was called, Captain Hollister, had, at an early day, been erected directly facing the main street, so as, ostensibly, to interpose a barrier to its further progress; yet horsemen, and subsequently teamsters, availed themselves of an opening, at the end of the building, to shorten their passage westward, until, in time, the regular highway was laid out along this course, and houses were gradually built, on either side, so as effectually to prevent any subsequent correction of the evil.

There were two material consequences to this insidious change in the regular plans of Marmaduke. The one, that the main street, after running about half its length, was suddenly reduced to precisely that difference in its width; and the other, that the "Bold Dragoon" became, next to the Mansion-house, by far the most conspicuous edifice in the place.

This conspicuousness, aided by the characters of the host and hostess, gave the tavern an advantage over all its future competitors, that no circumstances could conquer.

An effort was, however, made to do so; and, at the corner diagonally opposite, stood a new building, that was intended, by its occupants, to look down all opposition. It was a house of wood, ornamented in the prevailing style of architecture, and about the roof and ballustrades, was one of the three imitators of the Mansion-house. The upper windows were filled with rough boards, secured by nails, to keep out the cold air; for the edifice was far from finished, although glass was to be seen in the lower apartments, and the light of the powerful fires, within, denoted that it was already inhabited. The exterior was painted white, on the front, and on the end which was exposed to the street; but in the rear, and on the side which might, but did not, join the neighbouring house, it was coarsely smeared with Spanish brown. Before the door stood two lofty posts, connected at the top by a beam, from which was suspended an enormous sign, ornamented around its edges, with certain curious carvings, in pine boards, and loaded with masonic emblems on its faces. Over these mysterious figures, was written, in large letters, " The Templetown

Coffee-House, and Traveller's Hotel," and beneath them, " By Habakkuk Foote and Joshua Knapp." This was a fearful rival to the " Bold Dragoon," as our readers will the more readily perceive, when we add, that the same sonorous names were to be seen over the door of a newly-erected store in the village, a hatter's shop, and the gates of a tan-yard. But, either because too much was attempted to be well executed, or that the " Bold Dragoon" had established a reputation which could not be easily shaken, not only Judge Temple and his friends, but most of the villagers also, who were not in debt to the powerful firm we have named, frequented that inn, as a place of resort, on all occasions where such a house was necessary.

On the present evening, the limping veteran, who was styled Captain Hollister, and his consort, were barely housed, after their return from the academy, when the sounds of stamping feet at their threshold announced the approach of visitors, who were probably assembling, with a view to compare opinions, on the subject of the ceremonies they had witnessed.

The public, or, as it was called, the " bar-room," of the " Bold Dragoon," was a spacious apartment, lined on three sides with benches, and on the fourth by fire-places. Of the latter, there were two, of such size as to occupy, with their enormous jambs, the whole of that side of the apartment where they were placed, excepting room enough for a door or two, and a little apartment in one corner, which was protected by miniature pallisadoes, and profusely garnished with bottles and glasses. In the entrance to this sanctuary, Mrs. Hollister was seated, with great gravity in her air, while her husband occupied himself with stirring the fires; moving the logs with a large stake, burnt to a point at one end.

" There, Sargeant dear," said the landlady, after she thought the veteran had got the logs arranged in the most judicious manner, " give over poking the fires, for it's no good yee'll be doing, now that they burn so convaniently. There's the glasses on the table there, and the mug that the Doctor was taking his cider and ginger in, before the fire here,—jist put them in the bar, will ye? for we'll be having

the Joodge, and the Major, and Mr. Jones, down the night, widout reckoning Benjamin Poomp, and the Lawyers: so yee'll be fixing the room tidy; and put both flip-irons in the coals; and tell Jude, the lazy, black baste, that if she's no be claning up the kitchen, I'll jist turn her out of the house, and she may live wid the jontlemen that kape the 'Coffee-house,' good luck to 'em. Och! Sargeant, sure it's a great privilege to go to a mateing, where a body can sit asy, widout joomping up and down so often, as this Mr. Grant is doing the same."

"It's a privilege at all times, Mistress Hollister, whether we stand or be seated; or, as good Mr. Whitfield used to do, after he had made a wearisome day's march, get on our knees and pray, like Moses of old, with a flanker to the right and left, to lift his hands to heaven," returned her husband, who composedly performed what she had directed to be done. "It was a very pretty fight, Betty, that the Israelites had, on that day, with the Amalekites. It seems that they fout on a plain, for Moses is mentioned, as having gone on to the heights, to overlook the battle, and wrestle in

prayer; and if I should judge, with my little larning, the Israelites depended mainly on their horse, for it is written, that Joshua cut up the enemy with the edge of the *sword:* from which I infar, not only that they were horse, but well disciplyn'd troops. Indeed, it says as much, as that they were chosen men; quite likely volunteers; but raw dragoons seldom strike with the *edge* of their swords, particularly if the weapon be any way crooked."

"Pshaw! why do ye bodder yourself wid taxts, man, about so small a matter," interrupted the landlady; "sure it was the Lord who was wid 'em; for he always sided wid the Jews, at first, before they fell away; and it's but little matter what kind of men Joshua commanded, so that he was doing the right bidding. Aven them cursed millishy, the Lord forgive me for swearing, that was the death of him, wid their cowardice, would have carried the day in old times. There's no rason to be thinking that the soldiers was used to the drill."

"I must say, Mrs. Hollister," rejoined her husband, "that I have not often seen raw

troops fight better than the left flank of the militia, at the time you mention. They rallied very handsomely, and that without beat of drum, which is no easy thing to do under fire, and were very steady till he fell. But the scriptures contain no unnecessary words; and I will maintain, that horse, who know how to strike with the *edge* of the sword, must be well disciplyn'd. Many a good sarmon has been preached about smaller matters than that one word. If the text was not meant to be particular, why wasn't it written, with the sword, and not with the edge? Now, a back-handed stroke, on the edge, takes long practice. Goodness! what an argument would Mr. Whitfield make of that word edge!—As to the Captain, if he had only called up the guard of dragoons, when he rallied the foot, they would have shown the inimy what the edge of a sword was; for, although there was no commissioned officer with them, yet I think I may say,"—the veteran continued, stiffening his cravat about the throat, and raising himself up, with the air of a drill-sergeant, —"they were led by a man, who know'd how to bring them on, in spite of the ravine."

"Is it lade on ye would?" cried the land, lady, "when ye know yourself, Mr. Hollister-that the baste he rode was but little able to joomp from one rock to another, and the animal was as spry as a squirrel? Och! but it's useless to talk, for he's gone this many a long year. I would that he had lived to see the true light; but there's mercy for a brave sowl, that died in the saddle, fighting for the liberty. It's a poor tomb-stone they have given him, any way, and many a good one that died like himself: but the sign is very like, and I will be kapeing it up, while the blacksmith can make a hook for it to swing on, for all the 'coffee-houses' betwane this and Albany."

There is no saying where this desultory conversation would have led the worthy couple, had not the men who were stamping the snow off their feet, on the little platform before the door, suddenly ceased their occupation, and entered the bar-room.

For ten or fifteen minutes, the different individuals, who intended either to bestow or receive edification, before the fires of the "Bold Dragoon," on that evening, were col-

lecting, until the benches were nearly filled with men of different occupations; whilst Mr. Todd, and a slovenly-looking, half-genteel young man, who took tobacco profusely, wore a coat of imported cloth, cut with something like a fashionable air, frequently exhibited a large, French, silver watch, with a chain of woven hair, and who, altogether, seemed as much above the artisans around him, as he was inferior to the real gentleman, occupied a high-back, wooden settee, in the most comfortable corner in the apartment.

Sundry brown mugs, containing cider or beer, were placed between the heavy and irons, and little groups were formed among the guests, as subjects arose, or the liquor was passed from one to the other. No man was seen to drink by himself, nor in any instance was more than one vessel considered necessary, for the same beverage; but the glass, or the mug, was passed from hand to hand, until a chasm in the line, or a regard to the rights of ownership, would restore the dregs of the potation to him who discharged the cost.

Toasts were uniformly drunk; and occasionally, some one, who conceived himself

peculiarly endowed by nature to shine in the way of wit, would attempt some such sentiment as "hoping that he" who treated "might make a better man than his father;" or "live till all his friends wished him dead;" while the more humble pot-companion contented himself by saying, with a most imposing gravity in his air, "come, here's luck," or by expressing some other equally comprehensive wish. In every instance, the veteran landlord was requested to imitate the custom of the cup-bearers to kings, and taste the liquor he presented, by the significant invitation of "after you is manners;" with which request he ordinarily complied, by wetting his lips, first expressing the wish of "here's hoping," leaving it to the imagination of the hearers to fill the vacuum by whatever good each thought most desirable. During these movements, the landlady was busily occupied with mixing the various compounds required by her customers, with her own hands, and occasionally exchanging greetings and inquiries after the conditions of their respective families, with such of the villagers as approached "the bar."

At length, the common thirst being in some measure assuaged, conversation of a more general nature became the order of the hour. The physician, and his companion, who was one of the two lawyers of the village, being considered as the best qualified to maintain a public discourse with credit, were the principal speakers, though a remark was hazarded, now and then, by Mr. Doolittle, who was thought to be their inferior, only in the enviable point of education. A general silence was produced on all but the two speakers, by the following observation from the practitioner of the law :—

" So, Doctor Todd, I understand that you have been performing an important operation this evening, by cutting a charge of buck-shot from the shoulder of the son of Leather-stocking?"

" Yes, sir," returned the other, elevating his little head, with an air of great indifference, " I had a small job, up at the Judge's, in that way : it was, however, but a trifle to what it might have been, had it gone through the body. The shoulder is not a very vital part ; and I think the young man will soon

be well. But I did not know that the patient was a son of Leather-stocking: it is news to me, to hear that Natty had a wife."

"It is by no means a necessary consequence," returned the other, winking, with a shrewd look around the bar-room; "there is such a thing, I suppose you know in law, as a 'filius nullius.'"

"Spake it out, man," exclaimed the landlady, "spake it out in king's English; what for should ye be talking Indian, in a room full of Christian folks, though it is about a poor hunter, who is but a little better in his ways than the wild savages themselves? Och! it's to be hoped that the missionaries will, in his own time, make a convarsion of the poor divils; and then it will matter but little, of what colour is the skin, or wedder there be wool or hair on the head."

"Oh! it is Latin, not Indian, Miss Hollister," returned the lawyer, repeating his winks and shrewd looks; "and Dr. Todd understands Latin, or how would he read the labels on his gallipots and drawers? No, no, Miss Hollister, the Doctor understands me; don't you, Doctor?"

" Hem—why I guess I am not far out of the way," returned Elnathan, endeavouring to imitate the expression of the other's countenance, by looking jocular; " Latin is a queer language, gentlemen;—now, I rather think there is no one in the room, except Squire Lippet, who can believe that ' Far. Av.' means oatmeal, in English."

The lawyer, in his turn, was a good deal embarrassed by this display of learning; for although he actually had taken his first degree at one of the eastern universities, he was somewhat puzzled with the terms used by his companion. It would be imprudent, however, to appear to be outdone in a public bar-room, and before so many of his clients; he therefore put the best face on the matter, and laughed knowingly, as if there was a good joke concealed under it, that was understood only by the physician and himself. All this was attentively observed by the listeners, who exchanged looks of approbation; and the expressions of " tonguey man," and " I guess Squire Lippet knows, if any body doos," were heard in different parts of the room, as vouchers for the admiration of his

auditors. Thus encouraged, the lawyer rose from his chair, and, turning his back to the fire, so as to face the company, he continued—

"The son of Natty, or the son of nobody, I hope the young man is not going to let the matter drop. This is a country of laws; and I should like to see it fairly tried, whether a man who owns, or says he owns, a hundred thousand acres of land, has any more right to shoot a body, than another. What do you think of it, Dr. Todd?"

"Oh! sir, I am of opinion that the gentleman will soon be well, as I said before; the wownd isn't in a vital part, and as the ball was extracted so soon, and the shoulder was what I call well attended to, I do not think there is as much danger as there might have been."

"I say, Squire Doolittle," continued the angry attorney, "you are a magistrate, and know what is law, and what is not law. I ask you, sir, if shooting a man is a thing that is to be settled so very easily? Suppose, sir, that the young man had a wife and family; and suppose that he was a mechanic, like

yourself, sir; and suppose that his family depended on him for bread; and suppose that the ball, instead of merely going through the flesh, had broken the shoulder-blade, and crippled him for ever;—I ask you all, gentlemen, supposing this to be the case, whether a jury wouldn't give what I call handsome damages?"

As the close of this supposititious case was addressed to the company, generally, Hiram did not, at first, consider himself called on for a reply; but finding the eyes of the listeners bent on him in expectation, he remembered his character for judicial discrimination, and spoke, observing a due degree of deliberation and dignity in his manner.

"Why, if a man should shoot another," he said, "and if he should do it on purpose, and if the law took notice on't, and if a jury should find him guilty, it would be likely to turn out a state-prison matter."

"It would so, sir," returned the attorney.—"The law, gentlemen, is no respecter of persons, in a free country. It is one of the great blessings that have been handed down to us from our ancestors, that all men are

equal in the eye of the law, as they are by nater. Though some may get property, no one knows how, yet they are not privileged to transgress the laws, any more than the poorest citizen in the state. This is my notion, gentlemen; and I think that if a man had a mind to bring this matter up, something might be made out of it, that would help pay for the salve—ha! Doctor?"

"Why, sir," returned the physician, who appeared a little uneasy at the turn the conversation was taking, "I have the promise of Judge Temple, before men—not but what I would take his word as soon as his note of hand—but it was before men. Let me see—there was Mounshier Ler Quow, and Squire Jones, and Major Hartmann, and Miss Pettibone, and one or two of the blacks by, when he said that his pocket would amply reward me for what I did."

"Was the promise made before or after the service was performed?" asked the attorney.

"It might have been both," said the discreet physician, "though I'm certain he said so, before I undertook the dressing."

"But it seems that he said his pocket should reward you, Doctor," observed Hiram; "now I don't know that the law will hold a man to such a promise: he might give you his pocket with sixpence in't, and tell you to take your pay out on't."

"That would not be a reward in the eye of the law," interrupted the attorney—"not what is called a 'quid pro quo;' nor is the pocket to be considered as an agent, but as part of a man's own person, that is, in this particular. I am of opinion that an action would lie on that promise, and will undertake to bear him out, free of costs, if he don't recover."

To this proposition the physician made no reply, but he was observed to cast his eyes around him, as if to enumerate the witnesses, in order to substantiate this promise also, at a future day, should it prove necessary. A subject so momentous, as that of suing Judge Temple, was not a very palatable one to the present company, in so public a place; and a short silence ensued, that was only interrupted by the opening of the door, and the entrance of Natty himself.

The old hunter carried in his hand his

never-failing companion, the rifle; and, although all of the company were uncovered, excepting the lawyer, who wore his hat on one side, with a certain knowing air, Natty moved to the front of one of the fires, without in the least altering any part of his dress or appearance. Several questions were addressed to him, on the subject of the game he had killed, which he answered readily, and with some little interest; and the landlord, between whom and Natty there existed much cordiality, on account of their both having been soldiers in their youth, offered him a glass of a liquid, which, if we might judge from its reception, was no unwelcome guest. When the forester had gotten his potation also, he quietly took his seat on the end of one of the logs, that lay nigh to the fires, and the slight interruption, produced by his entrance, seemed to be forgotten.

"The testimony of the blacks could not be taken, sir," continued the lawyer, "for they are all the property of Mr. Jones, who owns their time. But there is a way by which Judge Temple, or any other man, might be made to pay for shooting another, and for

the cure in the bargain.—There is a way, I say, and that without going into the 'court of errors' too."

"And a mighty big error ye would make of it, Mister Todd," cried the landlady, "should ye be putting the matter into the law at all, with Joodge Temple, who has a purse as long as one of them pines on the hill, and who is an asy man to dale wid, if yees but mind the humour of him. He's a good man is Joodge Temple, and a kind one, and one who will be no the likelier to do the pratty thing, bekaase ye would wish to tarrify him wid the law. I know of but one objaction to the same, which is an over carelessness about his sowl. It's nather a Methodie, nor a Papish, nor a Prasbetyrian, that he is, but jist nothing at all; and it's hard to think that he 'who will not fight the good fight, under the banners of a rig'lar church, in this world, will be mustered among the chosen in heaven,' as my husband, the Captain there, as ye call him, says—though there is but one captain that I know, who desaarves the name. I hopes, Latherstocking, ye'll no be foolish, and putting the

boy up to try the law in the matter; for 'twill be an evil day to ye both, when ye first turn the skin of so paceable an animal as a sheep into a bone of contention. The lad is wilcome to his drink for nothing, until his shouther will bear the rifle ag'in."

"Well, that's gin'rous," was heard from several mouths at once, at this liberal offer of the landlady; while the hunter, instead of expressing any of that indignation which he might be supposed to feel, at the mentioning of the hurt of his young companion, opened his mouth, with the silent laugh for which he was so remarkable; and after he had indulged his humour, made this reply—

"I know'd the Judge would do nothing with his smooth-bore, when he got out of his sleigh. I never see'd but one smooth-bore, that would carry at all, and that was a French ducking-piece, upon the big lakes; it had a barrel half as long ag'in as my rifle, and would throw fine shot into a goose, at a hundred yards; but it made dreadful work with the game, and you wanted a boat to carry it about in. When I went with Sir William ag'in the French, at Fort Niagara,

all the rangers used the rifle; and a dreadful weepon it is, in the hands of one who knows how to charge it, and keeps a steady aim. The Captain knows, for he says he was a soldier in Shirley's, and though they were nothing but baggonet-men, he must know how we cut up the French and Iroquois in the skrimmages, in that war. Chingachgook, which means 'big sarpent' in English, old John Mohegan, who lives up at the hut with me, was a great warrior then, and was out with us; he can tell all about it; though he was an overhand for the tomahawk, never firing more than once or twice, before he was running in for the scalps. Ah! hum! times is dreadfully altered since then. Why, Doctor, there was nothing but a foot-path, or at the most a track for pack-horses, along the Mohawk, from the Garman flats clean up to the forts. Now, they say, they talk of running one of them wide roads with gates on't, along the river; first making a road, and then fencing it up! I hunted one season back of the Kaatskills, nigh-hand to the settlements, and the dogs often lost the scent, when they com'd to them highways, there was so

much travel on them; though I can't say that the brutes was of a very good breed.—Old Hector will wind a deer in the fall of the year, across the broadest place in the Otsego, and that is a mile and a half, for I paced it myself on the ice, when the tract was first surveyed under the Indian grant."

" It sames to me, Natty, but a sorry compliment, to call your cumrad after the evil one," said the landlady; " and it's no much like a snake that old John is looking now. Nimrood would be a more besaming name for the lad, and a more Christian too, seeing that it comes from the Bible. The Sargeant read me the chapter about him, the night before my christening, and a mighty asement it was, to listen to any thing from the book."

" Old John and Chingachgook were very different men to look on," returned the hunter, shaking his head at his melancholy recollections.—" In the ' fifty-eight war,' he was in the middle of manhood, and was taller than now by three inches. If you had seen him, as I did, the morning we beat Dieskau, from behind our log walls, you would have called him as comely a red-skin as you ever set eyes

on. He was naked, all to his breech-cloth and leggens; and you never seed a creatur so handsomely painted. One side of his face was red, and the other black. His head was shaved clean, all to a few hairs on the crown, where he wore a tuft of eagle's feathers, as bright as if they had come from a peacock's tail. He had coloured his sides, so that they looked just like an atomy, ribs and all; for Chingachgook had a great notion in such things: so that, what with his bold, fiery countenance, his knife and his tomahawk, I have never seed a fiercer warrior on the ground. He played his part, too, like a man; for I seen him next day, with thirteen scalps on his pole. And I will say that for the 'Big Snake,' that he always dealt fair, and never scalped any that he didn't kill with his own hands."

"Well, well," cried the landlady, "fighting is fighting, any way, and there's different fashions in the thing; though I can't say that I relish mangling a body after the breath is out of it; neither do I think it can be uphild by doctrine. I hopes, Sargeant, ye niver was helping in sich evil worrek."

"It was my duty to keep my ranks, and to stand or fall by the baggonet or lead," returned the veteran. "I was then in the fort, and seldom leaving my place, saw but little of the savages, who kept on the flanks, or in front, skrimmaging. I remember, howsomever, to have heard mention made of the 'Great Snake,' as he was called, for he was a chief of renown; but little did I ever expect to see him enlisted in the cause of Christianity, and civilized, like old John."

"Oh! he was christianized by the Moravians, who was always over intimate with the Delawares," said Leather-stocking. "It's my opinion, that had they been left to themselves, there would be no such doings now, about the head-waters of the two rivers, and that these hills mought have been kept as good hunting-ground, by their right owner, who is not too old to carry a rifle, and whose sight is as true as a fish-hawk, hovering"——

He was interrupted by more stamping at the door, and presently the party from the Mansion-house entered, followed by the Indian himself.

CHAPTER II.

"There's quart pot, pint pot, half-pint,
Gill pot, half-gill, nipperkin,
And the brown bowl.—
Here's a health to the barley mow,
My brave boys,
Here's a health to the barley mow."
Drinking Song.

SOME little commotion was produced by the appearance of these new guests, during which the lawyer disappeared from the room. Most of the men approached Marmaduke, and shook his offered hand, hoping "that the Judge was well;" while Major Hartmann, having laid aside his hat and wig, and substituted for the latter a warm, peaked, woollen night-cap, took his seat very quietly, on one end of the settee, that was relinquished by its former occupants. His tobacco-box was next produced, and a clean pipe was handed him by the landlord. As soon as he succeeded in raising a smoke, the Major gave a long

whiff, and turning his head towards the bar, he said—

"Betty, pring in ter toddy."

In the mean time, the Judge had exchanged his salutations with most of the company, and taken a place by the side of the Major, and Richard had bustled himself into the most convenient seat in the room. Mr. Le Quoi was the last seated, nor did he venture to place his chair finally, until, by frequent removals, he had ascertained that he could not possibly intercept a ray of heat from any individual present. Mohegan found a place on an end of one of the benches, and somewhat approximated to the bar. When these movements had subsided, the Judge remarked, pleasantly—

"Well, Betty, I find you retain your popularity, through all weathers, against all rivals, and amongst all religions.—How liked you the sermon?"

"Is it the sarmon?" exclaimed the landlady. "I can't say but it was rasonable; but the prayers is mighty unasy. It's no so small a matter for a body, in their fifty-nint' year,

to be moving so much in church. Mr. Gran. sames a godly man, any way, and his gyrrel is a hoomble one, and a devout.—Here, John, is a mug of cider lac'd with whisky. An Indian will drink cider, though he niver be athirst."

"I must say," observed Hiram, with due deliberation, "that it was a tonguey thing; and I rather guess that it gave considerable satisfaction. There was one part, though, which might have been left out, or something else put in; but then, I s'pose that, as it was a written discourse, it is not so easily altered, as where a minister preaches without notes."

"Ay! there's the rub, Joodge," cried the landlady; "how can a man stand up and be praching his word, when all that he is saying is written down, and he is as much tied to it as iver a thaving dragoon was to the pickets?"

"Well, well," cried Marmaduke, waving his hand for silence, "there is enough said; as Mr. Grant told us, there are different sentiments on such subjects, and in my opinion he spoke most sensibly.—So, Jotham, I am

told you have sold your betterments to a new settler, and have moved into the village and opened a school. Was it cash or dicker?"

The man who was thus addressed, occupied a seat immediately behind Marmaduke, so that one who was ignorant of the extent of the Judge's observation, might have thought he would have escaped notice. He was of a thin, shapeless figure, with a discontented expression of countenance, and with something extremely shiftless in his whole air. Thus spoken to, after turning and twisting a little, by way of preparation, he made a reply.

" Why, part cash, and part dicker. I sold out to a Pumfret-man, who was something forehanded. He was to give me ten dollars an acre for the clearin, and one dollar an acre over the first cost, on the wood-land: and we agreed to leave the buildings to men. So I tuck Asa Mountagu, and he tuck Absalom Bement, and they two tuck old Squire Naphtali Green. And so they had a meetin, and made out a vardict of eighty dollars for the buildings. There was twelve acres of clearin, at ten dollars, and eighty-eight at one, and the

whull came to jist two hundred and eighty-six dollars and a half, after paying the men."

"Hum," said Marmaduke; "what did you give for the place?"

"Why, besides what's comin to the Judge, I gi'n my brother Tim. a hundred dollars for his bargain; but then there's a new house on't, that cost me sixty more, and I paid Moses a hundred dollars, for choppin, and loggin, and sowin: so that the whull stood me in about two hundred and sixty dollars. But then I had a great crop off on't, and as I got jist twenty-six dollars and a half more than it cost, I conclude I made a pretty good trade on't."

"Yes, but you forget that the crop was yours without the trade, and you have turned yourself out of doors for twenty-six dollars."

"Oh! the Judge is clean out," said the man, with a sagacious look of calculation; "he turned out a span of horses, that is worth a hundred and fifty dollars of any man's money, with a bran new wagon; fifty dollars in cash; a good note for eighty more; and a side-saddle that was valood at seven and a

half—so there was jist twelve shillings betwixt us. I wanted him to turn out a set of harness, and take the cow and the sap-troughs. He wouldn't—but I saw through it; he thought I should have to buy the tackling before I could use the wagon and horses; but I know'd a thing or two myself: I should like to know of what use is the tackling to him? I offered him to trade back ag'in, for one hundred and fifty-five. But my woman said she wanted a churn, so I tuck a churn for the change."

"And what do you mean to do with your time, this winter? you must remember that time is money."

"Why, as the master is gone down country, to see his mother, who, they say, is going to make a die on't, I agreed to take the school in hand, till he comes back. If times doesn't get worse in the spring, I've some notion of going into trade, or maybe I may move off to the Genessee; they say they are carrying on a great stroke of business that-a-way. If the worst comes to the worst, I can but work at my trade, for I was brought up in a shoe manufactory."

It would seem, that Marmaduke did not

think his society of sufficient value, to attempt inducing him to remain where he was; for he addressed no further discourse to the man, but turned his attention to other subjects.— After a short pause, Hiram ventured a question:—

"What news doos the Judge bring us from the legislater? it's not likely that congress has done much this session; or maybe the French haven't fit any more battles lately?"

"The French, since they have beheaded their king, have done nothing but fight," returned the Judge. "The character of the nation seems changed. I knew many French gentlemen, during our war, and they all appeared to me to be men of great humanity and goodness of heart; but these Jacobins are as blood-thirsty as bull-dogs."

"There was one Roshambow wid us, down at Yorrek-town," cried the landlady; "a mighty pratty man he was too; and their horse was the very same. It was there that the Sargeant got the hurt in the leg, from the English batteries, bad luck to 'em."

"Ah! mon pauvre Roi!" murmured Monsieur Le Quoi.

"The legislature have been passing laws," continued Marmaduke, "that the country much required. Among others, there is an act, prohibiting the drawing of seines, at any other than proper seasons, in certain of our streams and small lakes; and another, to prohibit the killing of deer in the teeming months. These are laws that were loudly called for, by judicious men; nor do I despair of getting an act, to make the unlawful falling of timber a criminal offence."

The hunter listened to this detail with breathless attention; and when the Judge had ended, he laughed in open derision for a moment, before he made this reply:—

"You may make your laws, Judge, but who will you find to watch the mountains through the long summer days, or the lakes at night? Game is game, and who finds may kill; that has been the law in these mountains for forty years, to my sartain knowledge; and I think one old law is worth two new ones. None but a green-one would wish to kill a doe with a fa'n by its side, unless his moccasins was gettin old, or his leggins ragged, for the flesh is lean and coarse.

But a rifle rings amongst the rocks along the lake shore, sometimes, as if fifty pieces was fired at once; it would be hard to tell where the man stood who pulled the trigger."

"Armed with the dignity of the law, Mr. Bumppo," returned the Judge gravely, "a vigilant magistrate can prevent much of the evil that has hitherto prevailed, and which is already rendering the game scarce. I hope to live to see the day, when a man's rights in his game will be as much respected as his title to his farm."

"Your titles and your farms are all new together," cried Natty; "but laws should be equal, and not more for one than another. I shot a deer, last Wednesday was a fortnight, and it floundered through the snow-banks till it got over a brush fence; I catch'd the lock of my rifle in the twigs, in following, and was kept back, until finally the creater got off. Now I want to know who is to pay me for that deer; and a fine buck it was. If there hadn't been a fence, I should have gotten another shot into it; and I never draw'd upon any thing that hadn't wings, three times running, in my born days.—No, no, Judge,

it's the farmers that makes the game scarce, and not the hunters."

"Ter teer is not so plenty as in ter olt war, Pumppo," said the Major, who had been an attentive listener, amidst clouds of smoke; "put ter lant is not mate, as for ter teer to live on, put for Christians."

"Why, Major, I believe you're a friend to justice and the right, though you go so often to the grand house; but it's a hard case to a man, to have his honest calling for a livelihood stopt by sich laws, and that too when, if right was done, he mought hunt or fish on any day in the week, or on the best flat in the patent, if he was so minded."

"I unterstant you, Letter-stockint," returned the Major, fixing his black eyes, with a look of peculiar meaning, on the hunter; "put you tidn't use to pe so prutent, as to look ahet mit so much care."

"Maybe there wasn't so much 'casion," said the hunter, a little sulkily; when he sunk into a profound silence, from which he was not roused for some time.

"The Judge was saying something about the French," Hiram observed, so soon as the

pause in the conversation had continued a decent time.

"Yes, sir," returned Marmaduke, "the Jacobins of France seem rushing from one act of licentiousness to another. They continue those murders, which are dignified by the name of executions. You have heard, that they have added the death of their Queen to the long list of their crimes."

"Les Bêtes!" again murmured Monsieur Le Quoi, turning himself suddenly in his chair, with a kind of convulsive start.

"The province of La Vendée is laid waste by the troops of the republic, and hundreds of its inhabitants, who are royalists in their sentiments, are shot at a time.—La Vendée is a district in the south-west of France, that continues yet much attached to the family of the Bourbons: doubtless Monsieur Le Quoi is acquainted with it, and can describe it more faithfully."

"Non, non, non, mon cher ami," returned the Frenchman, in a suppressed voice, but speaking rapidly, and gesticulating with his right hand, as if for mercy, while with his left he concealed his eyes.

"There have been many battles fought lately," continued Marmaduke, "and the infuriated republicans are too often victorious. I cannot say, however, that I am sorry they have captured Toulon from the English, for it is a place to which they seem to have a just right."

"Ah—ha!" exclaimed Monsieur Le Quoi, springing on his feet, and flourishing both arms with great animation; "ces Anglais! dey be vipt! De French be one gallant peop', if dere vas gen'ral. Ah—ha! Toulon take! c'est bon! I do vish dat dey take Londre—pardonnez moi; mais, it ees bon!

The Frenchman continued to move about the room with great alacrity for a few minutes, repeating his exclamations to himself; when, overcome by the contradictory nature of his emotions, he suddenly burst out of the house, and was seen wading through the snow towards his little shop, waving his arms on high, as if to pluck down honour from the moon. His departure excited but little surprise, for the villagers were used to his manner; but Major Hartmann laughed outright, for the first time during his visit, as he lifted the mug, and observed—

"Ter Frenchman is mat—put he is goot as for notting to trink; he is trunk mit joy."

"The French are good soldiers," said Captain Hollister; "they stood us in hand a good turn, down at York-town; nor do I think, although I am an ignorant man about the great movements of the army, that his Excellency would have been able to march against Cornwallis, without their reinforcements."

"Ye spake the trut', Sargeant," interrupted his wife, "and I would iver have ye be doing the same. It's varry pratty men is the French; and jist when I stopt the cart, the time when ye was pushing on in front it was, to kape the rig'lars in, a rigiment of the jontlemen marched by, and so I dealt them out to their liking. Was it pay I got? sure did I, and in good, solid crowns; the divil a bit of continental could they muster among them all, for love nor money. Och! the Lord forgive me for swearing and spakeing of sich vanities; but this I will say for the French, that they paid in good silver; and one glass would go a great way wid 'em, for they gin'rally handed it back wid a drop in the cup; and that's a brisk trade, Joodge, where the pay is good, and the men not over partic'lar."

"A thriving trade, Mrs. Hollister," said Marmaduke. "But what has become of Richard? he jumped up as soon as seated, and has been absent so long that I am fearful he has frozen."

"No fear of that, cousin 'duke," cried the gentleman himself; "business will sometimes keep a man warm, the coldest night that ever snapt in the mountains. Betty, your husband told me, as we came out of church, that your hogs were getting mangy, so I have been out to take a look at them, and found it true. I stepped across, Doctor, and got your boy to weigh me out a pound of salts, and have been mixing it with their swill. I'll bet a saddle of venison against a gray squirrel, that they are better in a week. And, now Mrs. Hollister, I'm ready for a hissing mug of flip."

"Sure, I know'd yee'd be wanting that same," said the landlady; "it's mixt and ready to the boiling. Sargeant dear, jist be handing up the iron, will ye?—no—the one in the far fire, it's black, ye will see.—Ah! you've the thing now; look if it's not as red as a cherry."

The beverage was heated, and Richard took that kind of draught which men are apt

to indulge in, who think that they have just executed a clever thing, especially when they like the liquor.

"Oh! you have a hand, Betty, that was formed to mix flip," cried Richard, when he paused for breath. "The very iron has a flavour in it. Here, John; drink, man, drink. I and you and Dr. Todd, have done a good thing with the shoulder of that lad, this very night. 'Duke, I made a song while you were gone; one day when I had nothing to do; so I'll sing you a verse or two, though I haven't really determined on the tune yet.

What is life but a scene of care,
  Where each one must toil in his way?
Then let us be jolly, and prove that we are
A set of good fellows, who seem very rare,
  And can laugh and sing all the day.
    Then let us be jolly,
    And cast away folly,
  For grief turns a black head to gray.

There, 'duke, what do you think of that? There is another verse of it, all but the last line; I haven't got a rhyme for the last line yet.—Well, old John, what do you think of the music? as good as one of your war-songs, ha!"

"Good;" said Mohegan, who had been sharing too deeply in the potations of the landlady, besides paying a proper respect to the passing mugs of the Major and Marmaduke.

"Pravo! pravo! Richart," cried the Major, whose black eyes were beginning to swim in moisture; "pravissimo! it is a goot song; put Natty Pumppo hast a petter. Letterstockint, vilt sing? say, olt poy, vilt sing ter song, as apout ter woots?"

"No, no, Major," returned the hunter, with a melancholy shake of his head; "I have lived to see what I thought eyes could never behold in these hills, and I have no heart left for singing. If he, that has a right to be master and ruler here, is forced to squinch his thirst, when a-dry, with snow-water, it ill becomes them that have lived by his bounty to be making merry, as if there was nothing in the world but sunshine and summer."

When he had spoken, Leather-stocking again dropped his head on his knees, and concealed his hard and wrinkled features with his hands. The change from the excessive cold without to the heat of the bar-

room, coupled with the depth and frequency of Richard's draughts, had already levelled whatever inequality there might have existed between him and the other guests, on the score of spirits; and he now held out a pair of swimming mugs of foaming flip towards the hunter, as he cried—

"Merry! ay! merry Christmas to you, old boy! Sunshine and summer! no! you are blind, Leather-stocking, 'tis moonshine and winter;—take these spectacles, and open your eyes.

> So let us be jolly,
> And cast away folly,
> For grief turns a black head to gray.

Hear how old John turns his quavers. What damned dull music an Indian song is, after all, Major. I wonder if they ever sing by note?"

While Richard was singing and talking, Mohegan was uttering dull, monotonous tones, keeping time by a gentle motion of his head and body. He made use of but few words, and such as he did pronounce were in his native language, so that they were under-

stood by none but Natty. Without heeding Richard, he continued to sing a kind of wild, melancholy air, that rose, at times, in sudden and quite elevated notes, and then fell again into the low, quavering sounds, that seemed to compose the character of his music.

The attention of the company was now much divided, the men in the rear having formed themselves into little groups, where they were discussing various matters, among the principal of which were, the treatment of mangy hogs, and Parson Grant's preaching; while Dr. Todd was endeavouring to explain to Marmaduke the nature of the hurt received by the young hunter. Mohegan continued to sing, while his countenance was becoming vacant, though, coupled with his thick bushy hair, it was assuming an expression of something like brutal ferocity. His notes were gradually growing louder, and soon rose to a height that caused a general cessation in the discourse. The hunter now raised his head again, and addressed the old warrior, warmly, in the Delaware language, which, for the benefit of our readers, we shall render freely into English.

"Why do you sing of your battles, Chingachgook, and of the warriors you have slain, when the worst enemy of all is near you, and keeps the Young Eagle from his rights? I have fought in as many battles as any warrior in your tribe, but cannot boast of my deeds at such a time as this."

"Hawk-eye," said the Indian, tottering with a doubtful step from his place, "I am the Great Snake of the Delawares; I can track the Mingoes, like an adder that is stealing on the whippoor-will's eggs, and strike them, like the rattlesnake, dead at a blow. The white man made the tomahawk of Chingachgook bright as the waters of Otsego, when the last sun is shining; but it is red with the blood of the Maquas."

"And why have you slain the Mingo warriors? was it not to keep these hunting-grounds and lakes to your father's children? and were they not given in solemn council to the Fire-eater? and does not the blood of a warrior run in the veins of a young chief, who should speak aloud, where his voice is now too low to be heard?"

The appeal of the hunter seemed, in some

measure, to recall the confused faculties of the Indian, who turned his face towards the listeners, and gazed intently on the Judge. He shook his head, throwing his hair back from his countenance, and exposed his eyes, that were glaring with a fierce expression of wild resentment. But the man was not himself. His hand seemed to make a fruitless effort to release his tomahawk, which was confined by its handle to his belt, while his eyes gradually became again vacant. Richard at that instant thrusting a mug before him, his features changed to the grin of idiocy, and seizing the vessel with both hands, he sunk backward on the bench, and drunk until satiated, when he made an effort to lay aside the mug, with the helplessness of total inebriety.

"Shed not blood," exclaimed the hunter, as he watched the countenance of the Indian in its moment of ferocity—"but he is drunk, and can do no harm. This is the way with all the savages; give them liquor, and they make dogs of themselves. Well, well—the time will come when right will be done, and we must have patience."

Natty still spoke in the Delaware language, and of course was not understood. He had hardly concluded, before Richard cried—

"Well, old John is soon sowed up. Give him a birth, Captain, in the barn, and I will pay for it. I am rich to-night, ten times richer than 'duke, with all his lands, and military lots, and funded debts, and bonds, and mortgages.

Come let us be jolly,
And cast away folly,
For grief———

Drink, King Hiram—drink, Mr. Doo-nothing—drink, sir, I say. This is a Christmas eve, which comes, you know, but once a year."

"He! he! he! the Squire is quite möosical to-night," said Hiram, whose visage began to give marvellous signs of relaxation. "I rather guess we shall make a church on't yet, Squire?"

"A church, Mr. Doolittle! we will make a cathedral of it! bishops, priests, deacons, wardens, vestry and choir; organ, organist and bellows! By the Lord Harry, as Benjamin says, we will clap a steeple on the other end of it, and make two churches of it. What

say you, 'duke, will you pay? ha! my cousin Judge, wilt pay?"

"Thou makest such a noise, Dickon," returned Marmaduke, "it is impossible that I can hear what Dr. Todd is saying. I think thou observed, that it is probable that the wound will fester, so as to occasion danger to the limb, in this cold weather?"

"Out of nater, sir, quite out of nater," said Elnathan, attempting to expectorate, but succeeding only in throwing a light, frothy substance, like a flake of snow, into the fire—"quite out of nater, that a wownd so well dressed, and with the ball in my pocket, should fester. I s'pose, as the Judge talks of taking the young man into his house, it will be most convenient if I make but one charge on't."

"I should think one would do," returned Marmaduke, with that arch smile that so often beamed on his face; leaving the beholder in doubt whether he most enjoyed the character of his companion, or his own covert humour.

The landlord had succeeded in placing the Indian on some straw, in one of his outbuildings, where, covered with his own

blanket, John continued for the remainder of the night.

In the mean time, Major Hartmann began to grow noisy and jocular; glass succeeded glass, and mug after mug was introduced, until the carousal had run deep into the night, or rather morning; when the veteran German expressed an inclination to return to the Mansion-house. Most of the party had already retired, but Marmaduke knew the habits of his friend too well to suggest an earlier adjournment. So soon, however, as the proposal was made, the Judge eagerly availed himself of it, and the trio prepared to depart. Mrs. Hollister attended them to the door in person, cautioning her guests as to the safest manner of leaving her premises.

"Lane on Mister Jones, Major," said she, "he's young, and will be a support to ye. Well, it's a charming sight to see ye, any way, at the Bould Dragoon; and sure it's no harm to be kaping a Christmas-eve wid a light heart, for it's no telling when we may have sorrow come upon us. So good night Joodge, and a merry Christmas to ye all, to-morrow morning."

The gentlemen made their adieus as well as they could, and taking the middle of the road, which was a fine, wide, and well-beaten path, they did tolerably well until they reached the gate of the Mansion-house; but as soon as they entered the Judge's domains, they encountered some slight difficulties. We will not stop to relate them, but will just mention that, in the morning, sundry diverging paths were to be seen in the snow; and that once during their progress to the door, Marmaduke, missing his companions, was enabled to trace them by one of these paths to a spot, where he discovered them with nothing visible but their heads; Richard singing in a most vivacious strain,

> "Come let us be jolly,
> And cast away folly,
> For grief turns a black head to gray."

CHAPTER III.

"As she lay, on that day, in the Bay of Biscay, O!"

PREVIOUSLY to the occurrence of the scene at the "Bold Dragoon," which we have just related, Elizabeth had been safely reconducted to the Mansion-house, where she was left, as its mistress, either to amuse or employ herself during the evening, as best suited her own inclination. Most of the lights were extinguished; but as Benjamin adjusted, with great care and regularity, four large candles, in as many massive candlesticks of brass, in a row on the sideboard, the hall possessed a peculiar air of comfort and warmth, contrasted with the cheerless aspect of the room she had left, in the academy.

Remarkable had been one of the listeners to Mr. Grant, and returned with her resentment, which had been not a little excited by the language of the Judge, somewhat softened by reflection and the worship. She recollected

the youth of Elizabeth, and thought it no difficult task, under present appearances, to exercise that power indirectly, which hitherto she had enjoyed undisputed. The idea of being governed, or of being compelled to pay the deference of servitude, was absolutely intolerable; and she had already determined within herself, some half-dozen times, to make an effort, that should at once bring to an issue the delicate point of her future consideration; but as often as she met the dark, proud eye of Elizabeth, who was walking up and down the apartment, musing on the scenes of her youth, and the change in her condition, and perhaps the events of the day, the housekeeper experienced an awe, that she would not own to herself could be excited by any thing mortal. It, however, checked her advances, and for some time held her tongue-tied. At length she determined to commence the discourse, by entering on a subject that was apt to level all human distinctions, and in which she might display her own abilities.

"It was quite a wordy sarmont that Parson Grant give us to-night," said Remarkable.—

"Them church ministers be commonly smart sarmonizers; but they write down their idees, which is a great privilege: I don't think that by nater they are sich tonguey speakers for an off-hand discourse, as the standing-order ministers be."

"And what denomination do you distinguish as the standing-order?" inquired Miss Temple, with some surprise.

"Why, the Presbyterans, and Congregationals, and Baptists too, for-ti-'now, and all sich as don't go on their knees to prayer."

"By that rule, then, you would call those who belong to the persuasion of my father, the sitting-order," observed Elizabeth.

"I'm sure I've never heer'n 'em spoken of by any other name than Quakers, so called," returned Remarkable, betraying a slight uneasiness. "I should be the last one to call them so, for I never in my life used a disparaging tarm of the Judge, or any of his family. I've always set store by the Quakers, they are sich pretty-spoken, clever people; and it's a wonderment to me, how your daddy come to marry into a church family, for they are as contrary in religion as can be. One

sits still, and for the most part, says nothing, while the church folks practyse all kinds of ways, so that I sometimes think it quite moosical to see them; for I went to a church-meeting once before, down country."

"You have found an excellence in the church liturgy, that has hitherto escaped me," said Miss Temple. "I will thank you to inquire whether the fire in my room burns; I feel fatigued with my day's journey, and will retire."

Remarkable felt a wonderful inclination to tell the young mistress of the mansion, that by opening a door she might see for herself; but prudence got the better of her resentment, and after pausing some little time, as a salvo to her dignity, she did as desired. The report was favourable, and the young lady, wishing Benjamin, who was filling the stove with wood, and the housekeeper, each a good night, withdrew.

The instant that the door closed on Miss Temple, Remarkable commenced a sort of mysterious, ambiguous discourse, that was neither abusive nor commendatory of the qualities of the absent personage; but which

seemed to be drawing nigh, by regular degrees, to a most dissatisfied description. The Major-domo made no reply, but continued his occupation with great industry, which being happily completed, he took a look at the thermometer, and then, opening a drawer of the sideboard, he produced a supply of stimulants, that would have served to keep the warmth in his system, without the aid of the enormous fire he had been building. A small stand was drawn up near the stove, and the bottles and the glasses necessary for convenience, were quietly arranged. Two chairs were placed by the side of this comfortable situation, when Benjamin, for the first time, appeared to notice his companion.

"Come," he cried, "come, Mistress Remarkable, bring yourself to an anchor in this here chair. It's a peeler without, I can tell you, good woman; but what cares I blow high or blow low, d'ye see, it's all the same thing to Ben. The niggers are snug stowed below, before a fire that would roast an ox whole. The thermometer stands now at fifty-five, but if there's any vartue in good maple wood, I'll weather upon it, before one glass

as much as ten points more, so that the Squire, when he comes home from Betty Hollister's warm room, will feel as hot as a hand that has given the rigging a lick with bad tar. Come, Mistress, bring up in this here chair, and tell me how it is you like our new heiress."

"Why to my notion, Mr. Penguillum———"

"Pump—Pump," interrupted Benjamin, "it's Christmas-eve, Mistress Remarkable, and so d'ye see, you had better call me Pump. It's a shorter name, and as I mean to pump this here decanter till it sucks, why you may as well call me Pump."

"Did you ever!" cried Remarkable, with a laugh that seemed to unhinge every joint in her body: "You're a moosical creater, Benjamin, when the notion takes you. But as I was saying, I rather guess that times will be altered now in this house."

"Altered!" exclaimed the Major-domo, eyeing the bottle, that was assuming the clear white of cut glass with astonishing rapidity; "it don't matter much, Mistress Remarkable, so long as I keep the keys of the lockers in my pocket."

"I can't say," continued the housekeeper, "but there's good eatables and drinkables

enough in the house for a body's content—a little more sugar, Benjamin, in the glass—for Squire Jones is an excellent provider. But new lords, new laws; and I shouldn't wonder if you and I had an unsartain time on't in footer."

"Life is as unsartain as the wind that blows," said Benjamin, with a most imposing moralizing air; "and nothing is more varible than the wind, Mistress Remarkable, unless you happen to fall in with the trades, d'ye see, and then you may run for the matter of a month at a time, with studding-sails on both sides, alow and aloft, with the cabin-boy at the wheel."

"I know that life is disp'ut unsartain," said Remarkable, compressing her features to the humour of her companion; "but I expect there will be great changes made in the house to rights; and that you will find a young man put over your head, as well as there is one that wants to be over mine; and after having been settled as long as you have, Benjamin, I should judge that to be hard."

"Promotion should go according to length of sarvice," said the Major-domo, "and if-so-be that they ship a hand for my birth," d.

place a new steward aft, I shall throw up my commission in less time than you can put a pilot-boat in stays. Thof Squire Dickens," this was a common misnomer with Benjamin, "is a nice gentleman, and as good a man to sail with as heart could wish, yet I shall tell the Squire, d'ye see, in plain English, and that's my native tongue, that if-so-be he is thinking of putting any Johnny-raw over my head, why I shall resign. I began forrard, Mistress Prettybones, and worked my way aft, like a man. I was six months aboard a Garnsey lugger, hauling in the slack of the lee-sheet, and coiling up rigging. From that I went a few trips in a fore-and-after, in the same trade, which, after all, was but a blind kind of sailing in the dark, where a man larns but little, excepting how to steer by the stars. Well! then, d'ye see, I larnt how a topmast should be slushed, and how a top-gallant-sail was to be becketted; and then I did small jobs in the cabin, sich as mixing the skipper's grog. 'Twas there I got my taste, which you must have often seen is excellent.—Well, here's better acquaintance to us."

Remarkable nodded a return to the compliment, and took a sip of the beverage before her; for, provided it was well sweetened, she had no objection to a small potation now and then. After this observance of courtesy between the worthy couple, the dialogue proceeded as follows:

"You have had great experunces in your life, Benjamin; for, as the scripter says, 'they that go down to the sea in ships see the works of the Lord.'"

"Ay! for that matter, they in brigs and schooners too; and it mought say the works of the devil. The sea, Mrs. Remarkable, is a great advantage to a man, in the way of knowledge, for he sees the fashions of nations, and the shape of a country. Now, I suppose, for myself here, who am but an unlarned man to some that follows the seas, I suppose that, taking the coast from Cape Ler-Hogue as low down as Cape Finish-there, there isn't so much as a head-land, or an island, that I don't know either the name of it, or something more or less about it. Take enough, woman, to colour the water. Here's sugar. It's a sweet tooth, th[illegible]llow that

you hold on upon yet, Mistress Pretty-bones. But as I was saying, take the whole coast along, I know it as well as the way from here to the Bold Dragoon; and a devil of an acquaintance is that Bay of Biscay. Whew! I wish you could but hear the wind blow there. It sometimes takes two to hold one man's hair on his head. Scudding through the bay is pretty much the same thing as travelling the roads in this country, up one side of a mountain, and down the other."

"Do tell!" exclaimed Remarkable, "and doos the sea run as high as mountains, Benjamin?"

"Well, I will tell," said Benjamin; "but first let's taste the grog.—Hem! it's the right kind of stuff, I must say, that you keep in this country; but then you're so close aboard the West Indees, you make but a small run of it. By the Lord Harry, if Garnsey only lay somewhere between Cape Hatteras and the Bite of Logann, but you'd see rum cheap. As to the seas, they run more in lippers in the Bay of Biscay, unless it may be in a sow-wester, when they tumble about quite handsomely; [illegible] it's not in the narrow seas that

you are to look for a swell; just go off the Western Islands, in a westerly blow, keeping the land on your larboard hand, with the ship's head to the south'ard, and bring to, under a close-reef'd topsail; or mayhap a reef'd foresail, with a foretopmast staysail; and mizzen staysail, to keep her up to the sea, if she will bear it; and lay there for the matter of two watches, if you want to see mountains. Why, good woman, I've been off there in the Boadishey frigate, when you could see nothing but some such matter as a piece of sky, mayhap, as big as the mainsail; and then again, there was a hole under your lee-quarter, big enough to hold the whole British navy."

"Oh! for massy's sake! and wa'nt you afeard, Benjamin? and how did you get off?"

"Afeard! who the devil do you think was to be frightened at a little salt water tumbling about his head? As for getting off, when we had enough of it, and had washed our decks down pretty well, we called all hands, for d'ye see, the watch below was in their hammocks, all the same as if they were in one of your best bed-rooms; and so we watched for

a smooth time; clapt her helm hard a-weather, let fall the foresail, and got the tack aboard; and so, when we got her afore it, I ask you, Mistress Pretty-bones, if she didn't walk? didn't she! I'm no liar, good woman, when I say that I saw that ship jump from the top of one sea to another, just like one of these squirrels, that can fly, jumps from tree to tree."

"What, clean out of the water!" exclaimed Remarkable, lifting her two lank arms, with their bony hands spread in astonishment.

"It was no such easy matter to get out of the water, good woman, for the spray flew so that you couldn't tell which was sea and which was cloud. So there we kept her afore it, for the matter of two glasses. The First Lieutenant he cun'd the ship himself, and there was four quarter-masters at the wheel, besides the master, with six fore-castle men in the gun-room, at the relieving tackles. But then she behaved herself so well! Oh! she was a sweet ship, mistress! That one frigate was well worth more, to live in, than the best house in the island. If I was King of England, I'd have her hauled up above

Lon'on bridge, and fit her up for a palace; because why? If any body can afford to live comfortably, his Majesty can."

"Well! but Benjamin," cried his listener, who was in an ecstacy of astonishment, at this relation of the steward's dangers, "what *did* you do?"

"Do! why we did our duty, like good hearty fellows. Now, if the countrymen of Mounsheer Ler Quaw had been aboard of her, they would have just stuck her ashore on some of them small islands; but we run along the land until we found her dead to leeward of the mountains of Pico, and dam'me if I know to this day how we got there, whether we jumped over the island, or hauled round it: but there we was, and there we lay, under easy sail, fore-reaching, first upon one tack and then upon t'other, so as to poke her nose out now and then, and take a look to wind'ard, till the gale blow'd its pipe out."

"I wonder now!" exclaimed Remarkable, to whom most of the terms used by Benjamin were perfectly unintelligible, but who had got a confused idea of a raging tempest; "it

must be an awful life, that going to sea! and I don't feel astonishment that you're so affronted with the thoughts of being forced to quit a comfortable home like this. Not that a body cares much for't, as there's more housen than one to live in. Why, when the Judge agreed with me to come and live with him, I'd no more notion of stopping any time, than any thing. I happened in, just to see how the family did, about a week after Miss Temple died, thinking to be back home agin night; but the family was in sich a distressed way, that I couldn't but stop awhile and help 'em on. I thought the sitooation a good one, seeing that I was an unmarried body, and they was so much in want of help; so I tarried."

"And a long time have you left your anchors down in the same place, mistress; I think you must find that the ship rides easy?"

"How you talk, Benjamin! there's no believing a word you say. I must say that the Judge and Squire Jones have both acted quite clever, so long; but I see that now we shall have a spicimin to the contrary.

I heer'n say that the Judge was gone a great 'broad, and that he meant to bring his darter hum, but I didn't calcoolate on sich carrins on. To my notion, Benjamin, she's likely to turn out a disp'ut ugly gall."

"Ugly!" echoed the Major-domo, opening his eyes, that were beginning to close in a very suspicious sleepiness, in wide amazement; "by the Lord Harry, woman, I should as soon think of calling the Boadishey a clumsy frigate. What the devil would you have? arn't her eyes as bright as the morning and evening stars! and isn't her hair as black and glistening as rigging that has just had a lick of tar! doesn't she move as stately as a first-rate in smooth water, on a bow line! Why, woman, the figure-head of the Boadishey was a fool to her, and that, as I've often heard the captain say, was an image of a great Queen; and arn't Queens always comely, woman? for who do you think would be a King, and not choose a handsome bedfellow?"

"Talk decent, Benjamin," said the housekeeper, "or I won't keep your company. I don't gainsay her being comely to look on,

but I will maintain that she's likely to show but poor conduct. She seems to think herself too good to talk to a poor body. From what Squire Jones had tell'd me, I some expected to be quite captivated by her company. Now, to my reckoning, Lowizy Grant is much more pritty behaved than Betsy Temple. She wouldn't so much as hold discourse with me, when I wanted to ask her how she felt, on coming home and missing her mammy."

"Perhaps she didn't understand you, woman; you are none of the best linguister, and then Miss Lizzy has been exercising the King's English under a great Lon'on lady, and, for that matter, can talk the language almost as well as myself, or any native born British subject. You've forgot your schooling, and the young mistress is a great scollard."

"Mistress!" cried Remarkable; "don't make one out to be a nigger, Benjamin. She's no mistress of mine, and never will be. And as to speech, I hold myself as second to nobody out of New-England. I was born and raised in Essex county, and I've always

heer'n say, that the Bay State was provarbal for pronounsation."

"I've often heard of that Bay of State," said Benjamin, "but can't say that I've ever been in it, nor do I know exactly where away it is that it lays; but I suppose that there's good anchorage in it, and that it's no bad place for the taking of ling; but for size, it can't be so much as a yawl to a sloop of war, compared with the bay of Biscay, or mayhap, Tor-bay. And as for language, if you want to hear dictionary overhauled, like a log-line in a blow, you must go to Wapping, and listen to the Lon'oners, as they deal out their lingo. Howsomever, I see no such mighty matter that Miss Lizzy has been doing to you, good woman, so take another drop of your brew, and forgive and forget, like an honest soul."

"No, indeed! and I shan't do sich a thing, Benjamin. This treatment is a newity to me, and what I won't put up with. I have a hundred and fifty dollars at use, besides a bed and twenty sheep, to good; and I don't crave to live in a house where a body musn't call a young woman by her given name to her face. I *will* call her Betsy as much as I please; it's

a free country, and nobody can stop me. I did intend to stop while summer, but I shall quit to-morrow morning; and I will talk just as I please."

"For that matter, Mistress Remarkable," said Benjamin, "there's none here who will contradict you, for I'm of opinion that it would be as easy to stop a hurricane with a Barcelony hankerchy, as to bring up your tongue, when the stopper is off. I say, good woman, do they grow many monkeys along the shores of that Bay of State?"

"You're a monkey yourself, Mr. Penguillum," cried the enraged housekeeper, "or a bear! a black, beastly bear! and an't fit for a decent woman to stay with. I'll never keep your company agin, sir, if I should live thirty years with the Judge. Such talk is more befitting the kitchen than the keeping-room of a house of one who is well to do in the world."

"Look you, Mistress Pitty—Patty—Pretty-bones, mayhap I'm some such matter as a bear, d'ye see, as they will find who come to grapple with me; but dam'me if I'm a monkey—a thing that chatters without knowing

a word of what it says—a parrot, that will hold dialogue, for what an honest man knows, in a dozen languages; mayhap in the Bay of State lingo; mayhap in Greek or High Dutch. But dost it know what it means itself? canst answer me that, good woman? Your Midshipman can sing out, and pass the word, when the Captain gives the order, but just set him adrift by himself, and let him work the ship of his own head, and, stop my grog, if you don't find all the Johnny-raws laughing at him."

"Stop your grog indeed!" said Remarkable, rising with great indignation, and seizing a candle; "you're groggy now, Benjamin, and I'll quit the room before I hear any of your misbecoming words from you."

The housekeeper retired, with a manner but little less dignified, as she thought, than the air of the stately heiress, muttering, as she drew the door after her, with a noise like the report of a musket, the opprobrious terms of "drunkard," "sot," and "beast."

"Who's that you say is drunk?" cried Benjamin, fiercely, rising and making a movement towards Remarkable. "You talk of mus-

tering yourself with a lady! you're just fit to grumble and find fault. Where the devil should you larn behaviour and dictionary? in.your damn'd Bay of State, ha!"

Benjamin here fell back in his chair, and soon gave vent to certain ominous sounds, which resembled, not a little, the growling of his favourite animal, the bear itself. Before, however, he was quite locked, to use the language that would suit the Della-cruscan humour of certain refined critics of the present day, "in the arms of Morpheus," he spoke aloud, observing due pauses between his epithets, the impressive terms of "monkey," "parrot," "pic-nic," "tar-pot," and "linguisters."

We will not attempt to explain his meaning, nor connect his sentences, and our readers must be satisfied with our informing them, that they were expressed with all that coolness of contempt that a man might well be supposed to feel for a monkey.

Nearly two hours passed in this sleep, before the Major-domo was awakened by the noisy entrance of Richard, Major Hartmann, and the master of the mansion. Benjamin so

far rallied his confused faculties, as to shape the course of the two former to their respective apartments, when he disappeared himself, leaving the task of securing the house to him who was most interested in its safety. Locks and bars were but little attended to, in the early day of that settlement; and so soon as Marmaduke had given an eye to the enormous fires of his dwelling, he retired. And with this act of prudence closes the first night of our tale.

CHAPTER IV.

Watch. (*aside.*) Some treason, masters—
Yet stand close.
Much Ado about Nothing.

It was fortunate for more than one of the bacchanalians, who left the "Bold Dragoon" late in the evening, that the severe cold of the season was becoming, rapidly, less dangerous, as they threaded the different mazes, through the snow-banks, that led to their respective dwellings. Thin, driving clouds began, towards morning, to flit across the heavens, and the moon sat behind a volume of vapour, that was impelled furiously towards the north, carrying with it the softer atmosphere from the distant ocean. The rising sun was obscured by denser and increasing columns of clouds, while the southerly wind thatru shed up the valley, brought the never-failing symptoms of a thaw.

It was quite late in the morning, before Elizabeth, observing the faint glow which

appeared on the eastern mountain, long after the light of the sun had struck the opposite hills, ventured from the house, with a view to gratify her curiosity with a glance by daylight at the surrounding objects, before the tardy revellers of the Christmas-eve should make their appearance at the breakfast-table. While she was drawing the folds of her pelisse more closely around her form, to guard against a cold that was yet great, though rapidly yielding, in the small enclosure that opened in the rear of the house on a little thicket of low pines, that were springing up where trees of a mightier growth had lately stood, she was surprised by the voice of Mr. Jones, crying aloud—

"Merry Christmas, merry Christmas to you, cousin Bess. Ah, ha! an early riser, I see; but I knew I should steal a march on you. I never was in a house yet, where I didn't get the first Christmas greeting on every soul in it, man, woman and child; great and small; black, white and yellow. But stop a minute, till I can just slip on my coat; you are about to look at the improvements, I see, which no one can explain so

well as I, who planned them all. It will be an hour before 'duke and the Major can sleep off Mrs. Hollister's confounded distillations, and so I'll come down and go with you."

Elizabeth turned, and observed her cousin in his night-cap, with his head out of his bed-room window, where his zeal for pre-eminence, in defiance of the weather, had impelled him to thrust it. She laughed, and promising to wait for his company, she re-entered the house, making her appearance again, holding in her hand a packet that was secured by several large and important seals, just in time to meet the gentleman.

" Come, Bessy, come," he cried, drawing one of her arms through his own; " the snow begins to give, but it will bear us yet. Don't you snuff old Pennsylvania in the very air? This is a vile climate, girl; now at sunset last evening it was cold enough to freeze a man's zeal, and that, I can tell you, takes a thermometer near zero for me; then about nine or ten it began to moderate; at twelve it was quite mild, and here all the rest of the night I have been so hot as not to bear a blanket on

the bed.—Holla! Aggy!—merry Christmas, Aggy—I say, do you hear me, you black dog! there's a dollar for you; and if the gentlemen get up before I come back, do you come out and let me know. I wouldn't have 'duke get the start of me for the worth of your head."

The black caught the money from the snow, and promising a due degree of watchfulness, he gave the dollar a whirl in the air of twenty feet, and catching it as it fell, in the palm of his hand, he withdrew to the kitchen, to exhibit his present, with a heart as light as his face was happy in its expression.

"Oh, rest easy, my dear coz," said the young lady; "I took a look in at my father, who is likely to sleep an hour; and by using due vigilance you will secure all the honours of the season."

"Why, 'duke is your father, Elizabeth; but 'duke is a man who likes to be foremost, even in trifles. Now, as for myself, I care for no such things, except in the way of competition; for a thing which is of no moment in itself, may be made of importance in the way of competition. So it is with your father, he

loves to be first; but I only struggle with him as a competitor, like."

"Oh, it's all very clear, sir," said Elizabeth; "you would not care a fig for distinction, if there were no one in the world but yourself; but as there happen to be a great many others, why you must struggle with them all—in the way of competition."

"Exactly so; I see you are a clever girl, Bess, and one who does credit to her masters. It was my plan to send you to that school; for when your father first mentioned the thing, I wrote a private letter for advice to a judicious friend in the city, who recommended the very school you went to. 'Duke was a little obstinate at first, as usual, but when he heard the truth, he was obliged to consent to send you."

"Well, a truce to 'duke's foibles, sir; he is my father; and if you knew what he has been doing for you while we were in Albany, you would deal more tenderly with his character."

"For me!" cried Richard, pausing a moment in his walk to reflect. "Oh! he got the plans of the new Dutch meeting-house for me, I suppose; but I care very little about it, for

a man, of a certain kind of talent, is seldom aided by any such foreign suggestions; his own brain is the best architect."

"No such thing," said Elizabeth, looking provokingly knowing.

"No! let me see—perhaps he had my name put in the bill for the new turnpike, as a director?"

"He might, possibly; but it is not to such an appointment that I allude."

"Such an appointment!" repeated Mr. Jones, who began to fidget with curiosity; "then it is an appointment. If it is in the militia, I won't take it."

"No, no, it is not in the militia," cried Elizabeth, showing the packet in her hand, and then drawing it back, with a coquettish air; "it is an office of both honour and emolument."

"Honour and emolument! echoed Richard, in painful suspense; "show me the paper, girl. Say, is it an office where there is any thing to *do?*"

"You have hit it, cousin Dickon; it is the executive office of the county; at least so said my father, when he gave me this packet to

offer you as a Christmas box—'Surely, if any thing will please Dickon,' he said, 'it will be to fill the executive chair of the county.'"

"Executive chair! what nonsense!" cried the impatient gentleman, snatching the packet from her hand; "there is no such office in the county. Eh! what! it is, I declare, a commission, appointing Richard Jones, Esquire, Sheriff of the county. Well, this is kind in 'duke, positively. I must say 'duke has a warm heart, and never forgets his friends. Sheriff! High Sheriff of ——! It sounds well, Bess, but it shall execute better. 'Duke is a judicious man, after all, and knows human nature thoroughly. I'm sure I'm much obliged to him," continued Richard, using the skirt of his coat, unconsciously, to wipe his eyes; "though I would do as much for him any day, as he shall see, if I can have an opportunity to perform any of the duties of my office on him. It shall be well done, cousin Bess—it shall be well done, I say.—How this cursed south wind makes my eyes water."

"Now, Richard," said the laughing maiden, "now I think you will find something to do. I have often heard you complain of old, that there was nothing to do in this new country, while to my eyes, it seemed as if every thing remained to be done."

"Do!" echoed Richard, who blew his nose, raised his little form to its greatest elevation, and looked prodigiously serious. "Every thing depends on system, my girl. I shall sit down this afternoon, and systematize the county. I must have deputies, you know. I will divide the county into districts, over which I will place my deputies; and I will have one for the village, which I will call my home department. Let me see—oh! Benjamin! yes, Benjamin will make a good deputy; he has been naturalized, and would answer adimrably, if he could only ride on horseback."

"Yes, Mr. Sheriff," said his companion; "and as he understands ropes so well, he would be very expert, should occasion happen for his services, in the way of Jack Ketch."

"No," interrupted the other, "I flatter myself that no one could hang a man better than——that is—ha—oh! yes, Benjamin would do extremely well, in such an unfortunate dilemma, if he could be persuaded to attempt it. But I should despair of the thing. I never could induce him to hang, or teach him to ride on horseback. I must seek another deputy."

"Well, sir, as you have abundant leisure for all these important affairs, I beg that you will forget that you are the High Sheriff, and devote some little of your time to gallantry. Where are the beauties and improvements which you were to show me?"

"Where! why every where. Here I have laid out some new streets; and when they are opened, and the trees fallen, and they are all built up, will they not make a fine town? Well, 'duke is a liberal-hearted fellow, with all his stubbornness.—Yes, yes, I must have at least four deputies, besides a jailer."

"I see no streets in the direction of our walk," said Elizabeth, "unless you call the

short avenues through these pine bushes by that name. Surely you do not contemplate building houses, very soon, in that forest before us, and in those swamps."

"We must run our streets by the compass, coz, and disregard trees, hills, ponds, stumps, or, in fact, any thing but posterity. Such is the will of your father, and your father, you know——"

"Had you made Sheriff, Mr. Jones," interrupted the lady, with a tone which said very plainly to the gentleman, that he was touching a forbidden subject.

"I know it, I know it," cried Richard; "and if it were in my power, I'd make 'duke a king. He is a noble-hearted fellow, and would make an excellent king; that is, if he had a good prime minister.—But who have we here? voices in the bushes;—a combination about mischief, I'll wager my commission. Let us draw near, and examine a little into the matter."

During this dialogue, as the parties had kept in motion, Richard and his cousin advanced some distance from the house, into

the open space in the rear of the village, where, as may be gathered from the conversation, streets were planned and future dwellings contemplated; but where, in truth, the only mark of improvement that was to be seen, was a neglected clearing along the skirt of a dark forest of mighty pines, over which the bushes or sprouts of the same tree had sprung up, to a height that interspersed the fields of snow with little thickets of evergreen. The rushing of the wind, as it whistled through the tops of these mimic trees, prevented the footsteps of the pair from being heard, while their branches concealed their persons. Thus aided, the listeners drew nigh to a spot where the young hunter, Leather-stocking, and the Indian chief were collected in an earnest consultation. The former was urgent in his manner, and seemed to think the subject of deep importance, while Natty appeared to listen with more than his usual attention, to what the other was saying. Mohegan stood a little on one side, with his head sunken on his chest, his hair falling forward, so as to conceal most of his features,

and his whole attitude expressive of deep dejection, if not of shame.

" Let us withdraw," whispered Elizabeth; " we are intruders, and can have no right to listen to the secrets of these men."

" No right!" returned Richard, a little impatiently, in the same tone, and drawing her arm so forcibly through his own as to prevent her retreat; " you forget, cousin, that it is my duty to preserve the peace of the county, and see the laws executed. These wanderers frequently commit depredations; though I do not think John would do any thing secretly. Poor fellow! he was quite boozy last night, and hardly seems to be over it yet. Let us draw nigher, and hear what they say."

Notwithstanding the lady's reluctance, Richard, stimulated doubtless by his nice sense of duty, prevailed; and they were soon so near as distinctly to hear sounds.

" The bird must be had," said Natty, " by fair means or foul. Heigho! I've known the time, lad, when the wild turkeys wasn't over scarce in the country; though you must go into the Virginy gaps, if you want them for

the feathers. To be sure, there is a different taste to a partridge, and a well fattened turkey; though, to my eating, beaver's tail and bear's hams makes the best of food. But then every one has his own appetite. I gave the last farthing, all to that shilling, to the French trader, this very morning, as I come through the town, for powder; so, as you have nothing, we can have but one shot for it. I know that Billy Kirby is out, and means to have a pull of the trigger at that very turkey. John has a true eye for a single fire, and somehow, my hand shakes so, whenever I have to do any thing extrawnary, that I often lose my aim. Now when I killed the she-bear this fall, with her cubs, though they were so mighty ravenous, I knocked them over one at a shot, and loaded while I dodged the trees in the bargain; but this is a very different thing, Mr. Oliver."

"This," cried the young man, with an accent that sounded as if he took a bitter pleasure in his poverty, while he held a shilling up before his eyes—"this is all the treasure that I possess—this and my rifle! Now, indeed, I have become a man of the woods,

and must place my sole dependence on the fruits of the chase. Come, Natty, let us stake the last penny for the bird; with your aim, it cannot fail to be successful."

"I would rather it should be John, lad; my heart jumps into my mouth, because you set your mind so much on't; and I'm sartain that I shall miss the bird. Them Indians can shoot one time as well as another; nothing ever troubles them. I say, John, here's a shilling; take my rifle, and get a shot at the big turkey they've put up at the stump. Mr. Oliver is over anxious for the creater, and I'm sure to do nothing when I have over anxiety about it."

The Indian turned his head gloomily, and after looking keenly for a moment, in profound silence, at his companions, he replied—

"When John was young, eyesight was not straighter than his bullet. The Mingo squaws cried out at the sound of his rifle. The Mingo warriors were made squaws. When did he ever shoot twice! The eagle went above the clouds, when he passed the wigwam of Chingachgook; his feathers were plenty with the women.—But see," he said, raising his

voice from the low, mournful tones in which he had spoken, to a pitch of keen excitement, and stretching forth both hands—"they shake like a deer at the wolf's howl. Is John old? When was a Mohican a squaw, with seventy winters! No! the white man brings old age with him—rum is his tomahawk!"

"Why then do you use it, old man?" exclaimed the young hunter; "why will one so noble by nature, aid the devices of the devil, by making himself a beast!"

"Beast! is John a beast?" repeated the Indian slowly; "yes; you say no lie, child of the Fire-eater! John is a beast. The smokes were once few in these hills. The deer would lick the hand of a white man, and the birds rest on his head. They were strangers to him. My fathers came from the shores of the salt lake. They fled before rum. They came to their grandfather, and they lived in peace; or when they did raise the hatchet, it was to strike it into the brain of a Mingo. They gathered around the council-fire, and what they said was done. Then John was a man. But warriors and traders with light eyes followed them. One brought

the long knife, and one brought rum. They were more than the pines on the mountains; and they broke up the councils, and took the lands. The evil spirit was in their jugs, and they let him loose.—Yes, yes—you say no lie, Young Eagle, John is a beast."

"Forgive me, old warrior," cried the youth, grasping his hand; "I should be the last to reproach you. The curses of Heaven light on the cupidity that has destroyed such a race. Remember, John, that I am of your family, and it is now my greatest pride."

The muscles of Mohegan relaxed a little, and he said more mildly—

"You are a Delaware, my son; your words are not heard.—John cannot shoot."

"I thought that lad had Indian blood in him," whispered Richard, "by the awkward way he handled my horses, last night. You see, coz, they never use harness. But the poor fellow shall have two shots at the turkey, if he wants it, for I'll give him another shilling myself: though, perhaps, I had better offer to shoot for him. They have got up their Christmas sports, I find, in the bushes yonder, where you hear the laughter;—

though it is a queer taste this chap has for turkey; not but what it is good eating too."

" Hold! cousin Richard!" exclaimed Elizabeth, clinging to his arm; " would it be delicate to offer a shilling to that gentleman?"

" Gentleman again! do you think a half-breed, like him, will refuse money? No, no, girl; he will take the shilling; ay! and even rum too, notwithstanding he moralizes so much about it.—But I'll give the lad a chance for his turkey, for that Billy Kirby is one of the best marksmen in the country; that is, if we except the—the gentleman."

" Then," said Elizabeth, who found her strength unequal to her will, " then, sir, I will speak."—She advanced, with an air of proud determination, in front of her cousin, and entered the little circle of bushes that surrounded the trio of hunters. Her appearance startled the youth, who at first made an unequivocal motion towards retiring, but, recollecting himself, bowed, by lifting his cap, and resumed his attitude of leaning on his rifle. Neither Natty nor Mohegan betrayed any emotion, though the appearance of Elizabeth was so entirely unexpected.

"I find," she said, "that the old Christmas sport of shooting the turkey is yet in use among you. I feel inclined to try my chance for a bird. Which of you will take this money, and, after paying my fee, give me the aid of his rifle?"

"Is this a sport for a lady!" exclaimed the young hunter, with an emphasis that could not well be mistaken, and with a rapidity that showed he spoke without consulting any thing but feeling.

"Why not, sir?" returned the maiden. "If it be inhuman, the sin is not confined to one sex only. But I have my humour as well as others. I ask not your assistance, sir; but"—turning to Natty, and dropping a dollar in his hand—"this old veteran of the forest will not be so ungallant, as to refuse one fire for a lady."

"Leather-stocking dropped the money into his pouch, and throwing up the end of his rifle, he freshened his priming; and, first laughing in his usual manner, he threw the piece over his shoulder, and said—

"If Billy Kirby don't get the bird before me, and the Frenchman's powder don't hang

fire this damp morning, you'll see as fine a turkey dead, in a few minutes, as ever was eaten in the Judge's shanty. I have know'd the Dutch women on the Mohawk and Scoharie count greatly on coming to them merry-makings; and so, lad, you should'nt be short with the lady. Come, let us go forward, for if we wait, the finest bird will be gone."

"But I have a right before you, Natty, and shall try my own luck first. You will excuse me, Miss Temple; I have much reason to wish that bird, and may seem ungallant, but I must claim my privileges."

"Claim any thing that is justly your own, sir," returned the lady; "we are both adventurers, and this is my knight. I trust my fortunes to his hand and eye. Lead on, Sir Leather-stocking, and we will follow."

Natty, who seemed pleased with the frank address of the young and beauteous maiden, who had so singularly entrusted him with such a commission, returned the bright smile with which she had addressed him, by his own peculiar mark of mirth, and moved across the snow, towards the spot whence the sounds of boisterous mirth proceeded,

with the long strides of a hunter. His companions followed in silence, the youth casting frequent and uneasy glances towards Elizabeth, who was detained by a motion from Richard.

"I should think, Miss Temple," he said, so soon as the others were out of hearing, "that if you really wished a turkey, you would not have taken a stranger for the office, and such an one as Leather-stocking. But I can hardly believe that you are serious, for I have fifty at this moment shut up in the coops, in every stage of fat, so that you might choose any quality you pleased. There are six that I am trying an experiment on, by giving them brick-bats with——"

"Enough, cousin Dickon," interrupted the lady; "I do wish the bird, and it is because I so wish, that I commissioned this Mr. Leather-stocking."

"Did you ever hear of the great shot that I made at the wolf, cousin Elizabeth, who was carrying off your father's sheep?" said Richard, drawing himself up into an air of displeasure.—"He had the sheep on his back; and had the head of the wolf been on

the other side, I should have killed him dead; as it was——"

"You killed the sheep," again interrupted the young lady.—"I know it all, my dear coz. But would it have been decorous, for the High Sheriff of —— to mingle in such sports as these?"

"Surely you did not think I intended actually to fire with my own hands?" said Mr. Jones.—"But let us follow, and see the shooting. There is no fear of any thing unpleasant occurring to any female, in this new country, especially to your father's daughter, and in my presence."

"My father's daughter fears nothing, sir," returned Elizabeth; "more especially, when escorted by the highest executive officer in the county."

She took his arm, and he led her through the mazes of the bushes, to the spot where most of the young men of the village were collected for the sports of shooting a Christmas match, and whither Natty and his companions had already preceded them.

CHAPTER V.

> "I guess, by all this quaint array,
> The burghers hold their sports to-day."
>
> *Scott.*

The ancient amusement of shooting the Christmas turkey is one of the few sports that the settlers of a new country seldom or never neglect to observe. It was connected with the daily practices of a people, who often laid aside the axe or the scythe, to seize the rifle, as the deer glided through the forests they were felling, or the bear entered their rough meadows, to scent the air of a clearing, and to scan, with a look of sagacity, the progress of the invader.

On the present occasion, the usual amusement of the day had been a little hastened, in order to allow a fair opportunity to Mr. Grant, whose exhibition was not less a treat to the young sportsmen, than the one which engaged their present attention. The owner of the birds was a free black, who had been

preparing for the occasion a collection of game, that was admirably qualified to inflame the appetite of an epicure, and was well adapted to the means and skill of the different competitors, who were of all ages. He had offered to the younger and more humble marksmen divers birds of an inferior quality, and some shooting had already taken place, much to the pecuniary advantage of the sable owner of the game. The order of the sports was extremely simple, and well understood. The bird was fastened by a string of tow, to the base of the stump of a large pine, the side of which, towards the point where the marksmen were placed, had been flattened with an axe, in order that it might serve the purpose of a target, by which the merit of each individual might be ascertained. The distance between the stump and this point was one hundred measured yards: a foot more or a foot less being thought an invasion of the right of one of the parties. The negro affixed his own price to every bird, and the terms of the chance; but when these were once established, he was obliged by the strict principles of public justice that prevailed in the

country, to admit any adventurer who might offer.

The throng consisted of some twenty or thirty young men, most of whom had rifles, and a collection of all the boys in the village. The little urchins, clad in coarse but warm garments, stood gathered around the more distinguished marksmen, with their hands stuck under their waistbands, listening eagerly to the boastful stories of skill that had been exhibited on former occasions, and were already emulating in their hearts these wonderful deeds in gunnery.

The chief speaker was the man who had been mentioned by Natty, as Billy Kirby. This fellow, whose occupation, when he did labour, was that of clearing lands, or chopping jobs, was of great stature, and carried, in his very air, the index of his character. He was a noisy, boisterous, reckless lad, whose good-natured eye contradicted the bluntness and bullying tenor of his speech. For weeks he would lounge around the taverns of the county, in a state of perfect idleness, or doing small jobs for his liquor and his meals, and cavilling with applicants about

the prices of his labour; frequently preferring idleness to an abatement of a tittle of his independence, or a cent in his wages. But when these embarrassing points were once satisfactorily arranged, he would shoulder his axe and his rifle, slip his arms through the straps of his pack, and enter the woods with the tread of a Hercules. His first object was to learn his limits, round which he would pace, occasionally freshening, with a blow of his axe, the marks on the boundary trees; and then he would proceed, with an air of great deliberation, to the centre of his premises, and throwing aside his superfluous garments, he would measure, with a knowing eye, one or two of the nearest trees, that were towering apparently into the very clouds, as he gazed upward. Commonly selecting one of the most noble, for the first trial of his power, he would approach it with a listless air, whistling a low tune; and wielding his axe, with a certain flourish not unlike the salutes of a fencing-master, he would strike a light blow into the bark, and measure his distance. A pause of a moment was ominous of the fall of the forest, that had flourished

there for centuries. The heavy and brisk blows that followed, were soon succeeded by the thundering report of the tree, as it came, first cracking and threatening, with the separation of its own last ligaments, then thrashing and tearing with its branches the tops of its surrounding brethren, and finally meeting the ground, with a shock but little inferior to an earthquake!!!!! From that moment, the sounds of the axe would be ceaseless, while the falling of the trees was like a distant cannonading; and the daylight broke into the depths of the woods, with almost the suddenness of a winter morning.

For days, weeks, nay, months, Billy Kirby would toil, with an ardour that evinced his native spirit, and with an effect that seemed magical; until, his chopping being ended, his stentorian lungs could be heard, emitting sounds, as he called to his patient oxen, the assistants in his labour, which rung through the hills like the cries of an alarm. He had been heard, on a mild summer's evening, a long mile across the vale of Templeton; when the echoes from the mountains would take up his cries, until they died away in feeble

sounds, from the distant rocks that overhung the lake. His piles, or, to use the language of the country, his logging, ended, with a despatch that could only accompany his dexterity and Herculean strength, the jobber would collect together his implements of labour, light the heaps of timber, and march away, under the blaze of the prostrate forest, like the conqueror of some city, who, having first prevailed over his adversary, places the final torch of destruction, as the finishing blow to his conquest. For a long time Billy Kirby would then be seen, sauntering around the taverns, the rider of scrub-races, the bully of cock-fights, and, not unfrequently, the hero of such sports as the one in hand.

Between him and the Leather-stocking there had long existed a jealous rivalry, on the point of their respective skill in shooting. Notwithstanding the long practice of Natty, it was commonly supposed that the steady nerves and quick eye of the wood-chopper, rendered him his equal. Their competition had, however, been confined, hitherto, to boastings, and comparisons made from their successes in their various hunting excursions;

but this was the first time that they had ever come in open collision. A good deal of higgling, about the price of a shot at the choicest bird, had taken place between Billy Kirby and its owner, before Natty and his companions had rejoined the sportsmen. It had, however, been settled at one shilling a shot, which was the highest sum ever exacted, the black taking care to protect himself from losses, as much as possible, by the conditions of the sport. The turkey was already fastened at the "mark," but its body was entirely hid by the surrounding snow, and nothing left visible but its red, swelling head, and long, proud neck. If the bird was injured by any bullet that struck below the snow, it was still to continue the property of its present owner; but if a feather was touched in the visible part, the animal became the prize of the successful adventurer.

These terms were loudly proclaimed from the mouth of the negro, who was seated in the snow, in a somewhat hazardous vicinity to his favourite bird, as Elizabeth, and her cousin, the newly appointed executive chief of the county, approached the noisy sports-

men. The sounds of mirth and contention sensibly lowered at this unexpected visit, but after a moment's pause, the curious interest exhibited in the face of the young lady, together with her smiling air, restored the freedom of the morning; though it was somewhat chastened, both in language and vehemence, by the presence of such a spectator to their proceedings.

"Stand out of the way there, boys," cried the wood-chopper, who was placing himself at the shooting-point—"stand out of the way, you little rascals, or I will shoot through you. Now, Brom, you may say good-by to that turkey."

"Stop!" cried the young hunter; "I am a candidate for a chance too. Here is my shilling, Brom; I wish a shot too."

"You may wish it in welcome," cried Kirby; "but if I ruffle the gobbler's feathers, how are you to get it? is money so plenty in your deer-skin pocket, that you pay it for a chance that you may never have?"

"How know you, sir, how plenty money is in my pocket?" said the youth, fiercely.

"Here is my shilling, Brom, and I claim a right to shoot."

"Don't be crabbed, my boy," said the other, who was very coolly fixing his flint. "They say you have a hole in your left shoulder, yourself; so I think Brom may give you a fire for half-price. It will take a keen one to hit that bird, I can tell you, my lad, even if I give you a chance, which is a thing I have no mind to do."

"Don't be boasting, Billy Kirby," said Natty, throwing the breech of his rifle into the snow, and leaning on its barrel; "you'll get but one shot at the creater, for if the lad misses his aim, which wouldn't be a wonder if he did, with his arm so stiff and sore, you'll find a good piece and an old eye comin a'ter you. Maybe it's true, that I can't shoot as I used to could, but a hundred yards is but a short distance for a long rifle."

"What, old Leather-stocking, are you out this morning?" cried his reckless opponent. "Well, fair play's a jewel. But I've the lead of you, old fellow; and so here goes, for a dry throat or a good dinner."

The countenance of the negro evinced not only all the interest which his pecuniary adventure might occasion, but also the keen excitement that the sport produced in the others, though with a very different wish as to the result. While the wood-chopper was slowly and steadily raising his rifle, he exclaimed—

"Fair play, Billy Kirby—stand back—make 'em stand back, boys—gib a nigger fair play—poss up, gobbler; shake a head, fool; don't a see 'em pokin gun at 'em?"

These cries, which were intended as much to distract the attention of the marksman, as for any thing else, were, however, fruitless. The nerves of the wood-chopper were not so easily shaken, and he took his aim with the utmost deliberation. The dead stillness of expectation prevailed for a moment, and he fired. The head of the turkey was seen to dash on one side, and its wings were spread in momentary fluttering; but it settled itself down, calmly, into its bed of snow, and glanced its eyes uneasily around. For a time long enough to draw a deep breath, not a sound was heard. The silence was then

broken, by the noise of the negro, who laughed, and shook his body, with all kinds of antics, rolling over in the snow with the excess of his delight.

"Well done a gobbler," he cried, jumping up, and affecting to embrace his bird; "I tell 'em to poss up, and you see 'em dodge. Gib anoder shillin, Billy, and hab anoder shot."

"No—the shot is mine," said the young hunter; "you have my money already. Leave the mark, and let me try my luck."

"Ah! it's but money thrown away lad," said Leather-stocking. "A turkey's head and neck is but a small mark for a new hand and a lame shoulder. You'd best let me take the fire, and maybe we can make some sittlement with the lady about the bird."

"The chance is mine," said the young hunter. "Clear the ground, that I may take it."

The discussions and disputes concerning the last shot were now abating, it having been determined, that if the turkey's head had been anywhere but just where it was at the moment, the bird must certainly have been

killed. There was not much excitement produced by the preparations of the youth, who proceeded in a hurried manner to take his aim, and was just in the act of pulling the trigger, when he was stopped by Natty.

"Your hand shakes, lad," he said, "and you seem over eager. Bullet wownds are apt to weaken the flesh, and, to my judgment, you'll not shoot so well as in common. If you will fire, you should shoot quick, before there is time to shake off the aim."

"Fair play," again shouted the negro; "fair play—gib a nigger fair play. What right a Natty Bumppo tell a young man? Let 'em shoot—clear a ground."

The youth fired with great rapidity; but no motion was made by the turkey; and when the examiners for the ball returned from the "mark," they declared that he had missed the stump.

Elizabeth observed the change in his countenance, and could not help feeling surprise, that one so evidently superior to his companions, should feel a trifling loss so sensibly. But her own champion was now preparing to enter the lists.

The mirth of Brom, which had been again excited, though in a much smaller degree than before, by the failure of the second adventurer, vanished the instant that Natty took his stand. His skin became mottled with large brown spots, that sullied the lustre of his native ebony most fearfully, while his enormous lips gradually compressed around the two rows of ivory, that had hitherto been shining in his visage, like pearls set in jet. His nostrils, at all times the most conspicuous members of his face, dilated, until they covered the greater part of the diameter of his countenance; while his brown and bony hands unconsciously grasped the snow-crust near him, the excitement of the moment completely overcoming his native dread of cold.

While these indications of apprehension were exhibited in the sable owner of the turkey, the man who gave rise to this extraordinary emotion was as calm and collected, as if there was not to be a single spectator of his skill.

"I was down in the Dutch settlements on the Scoharie," said Natty, who was carefully

removing the leather guard from the lock of his rifle, " jist before the breaking out of the last war, and there was a shooting-match amongst the boys; so I took a hand in it myself. I think I opened a good many Dutch eyes that very day, for I won the powder-horn, three bars of lead, and a pound of as good powder as ever flashed in the pan of a gun. Lord! how they did swear in Garman! They did tell of one drunken Dutchman, who said he'd have the life of me, before I got back to the lakes ag'in. But if he had put his rifle to his shoulder, with evil intent, God would have punished him for it; and even if the Lord didn't, and he had missed his aim, I know one that would have given him as good as he sent, and better too, if good shooting could come into the 'count."

By this time the old hunter was ready for his business, and throwing his right leg far behind him, and stretching his left arm along the barrel of his piece, he raised it towards the bird. Every eye glanced rapidly from the marksman to the mark; but at the moment when each ear was expecting the report of

the rifle, they were disappointed by the ticking sound of the flint only. "A snap—a snap!" shouted the negro, springing from his crouching posture, like a madman, before his bird. "A snap as good as fire—Natty Bumppo gun he snap—Natty Bumppo miss a turkey."

"Natty Bumppo hit a nigger," said the indignant old hunter, "if you don't get out of the way, Brom. It's contrary to the reason of the thing, boy, that a snap should count for a fire, when one is nothing more than a fire-stone striking a steel pan, and the other is good lead, ay! and with a good aim; so get out of my way, boy, and let me show Billy Kirby how to shoot a Christmas turkey."

"Gib a nigger fair play," cried the black, who continued resolutely to maintain his post. "Ebbery body know dat snap as good as fire. Leab it to Massa Jone--leab it to young lady."

"Sartain," said the wood-chopper; "it's the law of the game in this part of the country, Leather-stocking. If you fire ag'in, you must pay up the other shilling. I b'lieve I'll

try luck ag'in myself; so, Brom, here's my money, and I take the next fire."

"It's likely you know the laws of the woods better than I do, Billy Kirby!" returned Natty. "You come in with the settlers, with an ox goad in your hand, and I come in with moccasins on my feet, and with a good rifle on my shoulder, so long back as before the old war: which is likely to know the best? I say, no man need tell me that snapping is as good as firing, when I pull the trigger."

"Leab it to Massa Jone," said the alarmed negro; "he know ebbery ting."

This appeal to the knowledge of Richard was too flattering to be unheeded. He therefore advanced a little from the spot where the delicacy of Elizabeth had induced her to withdraw, and gave the following opinion, with all the gravity that the subject and his own rank demanded:—

"There seems to be a difference in opinion," he said, "on the subject of Nathaniel Bumppo's right to shoot at Abraham Freeborn's turkey, without the said Nathaniel

paying one shilling for the privilege." This fact was too self-evident to be denied, and after pausing a moment, that the audience might digest his premises, Richard proceeded: —" It seems proper that I should decide this question, as I am bound to preserve the peace of the county; and men with deadly weapons in their hands, should not be heedlessly left to contention, and their own malignant passions. It seems that there was no agreement, either in writing or in words, on the disputed point; therefore we must reason from analogy, which is, as it were, comparing one thing with another. Now, in duels, where both parties shoot, it is generally the rule that a snap is a fire; and if such is the rule, where the party has a right to fire back again, it seems to me unreasonable, to say that a man may stand snapping at that turkey all day. I therefore am of opinion, that Nathaniel Bumppo has lost his chance, and must pay another shilling before he renews his right."

As this opinion came from such a high quarter, and was delivered with so much effect, it silenced all murmurs, for the whole

of the spectators had begun to take sides with great warmth, except from the Leather-stocking himself.

" I think Miss Elizabeth's thoughts should be taken," said Natty. " I've known the squaws give very good counsel, when the Indians have been dumb-foundered in their notions. If she says that I ought to lose, I agree to give it up."

" Then I adjudge you to be a loser, for this time," said Miss Temple; " but pay your money, and renew your chance; unless Brom will sell me the bird for a dollar. I will give him the money, and save the life of the poor victim."

This proposition was evidently but little relished by any of the listeners, even the negro feeling unwilling to lose the sport, though he lost his turkey. In the mean while, as Billy Kirby was preparing himself for another shot, Natty left the goal, with an extremely dissatisfied manner, muttering to himself, and speaking aloud—

" There hasn't been such a thing as a good flint sold at the foot of the lake, since the time when the Indian traders used to come

into the country;—and if a body should go into the flats along the streams in the hills, to hunt for such a thing, it's ten to one but they be all covered up with the plough. Heigho! it seems to me, that just as the game grows scarce, and a body wants the best ammunition, to get a livelihood, every thing that's bad falls on him, like a judgment. But I'll change the stone, for Billy Kirby hasn't the eye for such a mark, I know."

The wood-chopper seemed now entirely sensible that his reputation in a great manner depended on his care; nor did he neglect any means to insure his success. He drew up his rifle, and renewed his aim, again and again, still appearing reluctant to fire. No sound was heard from even Brom, during these portentous movements, until Kirby discharged his piece, with the same want of success as before. Then, indeed, the shouts of the negro rung through the bushes, and sounded among the trees of the neighbouring forest, like the outcries of a tribe of Indians. He laughed, rolling his head, first on one side, then on the other, until nature seemed exhausted with mirth. He danced, until his

legs were wearied with motion, in the snow; and, in short, he exhibited all that violence of joy that characterizes the mirth of a thoughtless negro.

The wood-chopper had exerted all his art, and felt a proportionate degree of disappointment at his failure. He first examined the bird with the utmost attention, and more than once suggested that he had touched its feathers; but the voice of the multitude was against him, for it felt disposed to listen to the so often repeated cries of the black, to "gib a nigger fair play."

Finding it impossible to make out a title to the bird, Kirby turned fiercely to the black, and said—

"Shut your oven, you crow. Where is the man that can hit a turkey's head at a hundred yards? I was a fool for trying. You needn't make an uproar, like a falling pine tree, about it. Show me the man who can do it."

"Look this a-way, Billy Kirby," said Leather-stocking, "and let them clear the mark, and I'll show you a man who's made better shots before now, and that when he's

been hard pressed by the savages and wild beasts."

"Perhaps there is one whose rights come before ours, Leather-stocking," said Miss Temple; "if so, we will waive our privilege."

"If it be me that you have reference to, madam," said the young hunter, "I shall decline another chance. My shoulder is yet weak, I find."

Elizabeth regarded his proud, but forced manner, and even thought that she could discern a tinge on his cheek, that spoke the shame of conscious poverty. She said no more, but suffered her own champion to make a trial.

Although Natty Bumppo had certainly made hundreds of more momentous shots, at his enemies or his game, yet he never exerted himself more to excel. He raised his piece three several times; once to get his range; once to calculate his distance; and once because the bird, alarmed by the deathlike stillness that prevailed, turned it's head quickly, to examine its foes. But the fourth time he fired. The smoke, the report, and the momentary shock, prevented most of the

spectators from instantly knowing the result; but Elizabeth, when she saw her champion drop the end of his rifle in the snow, and open his mouth in one of its silent laughs, and then proceed, very coolly, to recharge his piece, knew that he had been successful. The boys rushed to the mark, and lifted the turkey on high, lifeless, and with nothing but the remnant of a head.

" Bring in the creater," said Leather-stocking, " and put it at the feet of the lady. I was her deputy in the matter, and the bird is her property."

" And a good deputy you have proved yourself," returned Elizabeth—" so good, cousin Richard, that I would advise you to remember his qualities." She paused, and the gaiety that beamed on her face gave place to a more serious earnestness. She even blushed a little, as she turned to the young hunter, and, with the insinuating charm of a woman's best manner, added—" But it was only to see an exhibition of the far-famed skill of Leather-stocking, that I tried my fortunes. Will you, sir, accept the bird, as a

small peace-offering, for the hurt that prevented your own success?"

The expression with which the youth received this present was indescribable. He appeared to yield to the exquisite blandishment of her air, in opposition to a strong inward impulse to the contrary. He bowed, and raised the victim silently from her feet, but continued silent.

Elizabeth handed the black a piece of silver, as a remuneration for his loss, which had some effect in again unbending his muscles, and then expressed to her companion her readiness to return homeward.

"Wait a minute, cousin Bess," cried Richard; "there is an uncertainty about the rules of this sport, that it is proper I should remove.—If you will appoint a committee, gentlemen, to wait on me this morning, I will draw up, in writing, a set of regulations——" He stopped, with some indignation, to see who it was that so familiarly laid his hand on the shoulder of the High Sheriff of ——.

"A merry Christmas to you, cousin Dickon," said Judge Temple, who had ap-

proached the party unperceived: "I must have a vigilant eye to my daughter, sir, if you are to be seized daily with these gallant fits. But I admire your taste, which would introduce a lady to such scenes!"

"It is her own perversity, 'duke," cried the disappointed Sheriff, who felt the loss of the first salutation as grievously as many a man would a much greater misfortune; "and I must say that she comes honestly by it. I led her out to show her the improvements, but away she scampered, through the snow, at the first sound of the fire-arms, the same as if she had been brought up in a camp, instead of a first-rate boarding-school. I do think, Judge Temple, that such dangerous amusements should be suppressed by law; nay, I doubt whether they are not already indictable at common law."

"Well, sir, as you are Sheriff of the county, it becomes your duty to examine into the matter," returned the smiling Marmaduke. "I perceive that Bess has executed her commission, and I hope it met with a favourable reception."

Richard glanced his eye at the packet,

which he held in his hand, and the slight anger produced by his disappointment vanished instantly.

"Ah! 'duke, my dear cousin," he said, "step a little on one side; I have something I would say to you." Marmaduke complied, and the Sheriff led him to a little distance in the bushes, and continued—"First, 'duke, let me thank you for your friendly interest with the Council and the Governor, without which, I am confident that the greatest merit would avail but little. But we are sisters' children—we are sisters' children; and you may use me like one of your horses; ride me or drive me, 'duke, I am wholly yours.—But in my humble opinion, this young companion of Leather-stocking requires looking after. He has a very dangerous propensity for turkey."

"Leave him to my management, Dickon," said the Judge, gravely, "and I will cure his appetite by indulgence. It is with him that I would speak. Let us rejoin the sportsmen."

CHAPTER VI.

"Poor wretch! the mother that him bare,
If she had been in presence there,
In his wan face, and sun-burn'd hair,
She had not known her child."
Scott.

It diminished, in no degree, the effect produced by the conversation which passed between Judge Temple and the young hunter, that the former took the arm of his daughter, and drew it through his own, when he advanced from the spot whither Richard had led him, to where the youth was standing, in a musing attitude, leaning on his rifle, and apparently contemplating the dead bird that lay at his feet. The presence of Marmaduke did not interrupt the sports, which were resuming, by loud and clamorous disputes concerning the conditions of a chance, that involved the life of a bird of much inferior quality to the last. Leather-

stocking and Mohegan had alone drawn aside to the place where stood their youthful companion; so that, although in the immediate vicinity of such a throng, the following conversation was heard only by those who were interested in it.

"I have greatly injured you, Mr. Edwards," said the Judge; but the sudden and inexplicable start with which the person spoken to received this unexpected address, caused him to pause a moment in manifest surprise, also. As no answer was given, and the strong emotion exhibited in the countenance of the youth gradually passed away, he continued—"But, fortunately, it is in some measure in my power to compensate you for what I have done. My kinsman, Richard Jones, has received an appointment that will, in future, deprive me of his assistance, and leaves me, just now, destitute of one who might greatly aid me with his pen. Your manner, notwithstanding appearances, is a sufficient proof of your education, nor will thy shoulder suffer thee to labour, for some time to come. My doors are open to thee, my young friend, for in this infant country,

we harbour no suspicions; little offering to tempt the cupidity of the evil disposed. Become my assistant, for at least a season, and receive such compensation as thy services will deserve."

There surely was nothing in the manner or the offer of the Judge, to justify the reluctance, amounting nearly to loathing, with which the youth listened to his speech; but, after a powerful effort, as if for self-command, he replied—

"I would serve you, sir, or any other man, for an honest support, for I do not affect to conceal that my necessities are very great, even beyond what appearances would indicate; but I am fearful that such new duties would interfere too much with more important business; so that I must decline your offer, and depend on my rifle, as before, for my subsistence."

Richard here took occasion to whisper to the young lady, who had shrunk a little from the fore-ground of the picture—

"This, you see, cousin Bess, is the natural reluctance of a half-breed to leave the savage

state. Their attachment to a wandering life is, I verily believe, unconquerable."

"It is a precarious life," observed Marmaduke, without hearing the Sheriff's observation, "and one that brings more evils with it than present suffering. Trust me, my young friend, my experience is greater than thine, when I tell thee, that the unsettled life of these hunters is of vast disadvantage for temporal purposes, and it totally removes one from within the influence of more sacred things."

"No, no, Judge," interrupted the Leatherstocking; who was hitherto unseen, or disregarded; "take him into your shanty in welcome, but tell him the raal thing. I have lived in the woods for forty long years, and have spent five years at a time without seeing the light of a clearing, bigger than a windrow in the trees, and I should like to know where you'll find a man, in his sixty-eighth year, who can get an easier living, for all your betterments, and your deer-laws; and, as for honesty, or doing what's right between man and man, I'll not turn my back to the longest winded deacon on your patent."

"Thou art an exception, Leather-stocking," returned the Judge, nodding good-naturedly at the hunter; "for thou hast a temperance unusual in thy class, and a hardihood exceeding thy years. But this youth is made of materials too precious to be wasted in the forest. I entreat thee to join my family, if it be but till thy arm be healed. My daughter here, who is mistress of my dwelling, will tell thee that thou art welcome."

"Certainly," said Elizabeth, whose earnestness was strongly checked by the assumption of a woman's dignity. "The unfortunate would be welcome at any time, but doubly so, when we feel that we have occasioned the evil ourselves."

" Yes," said Richard, " and if you relish turkey, young man, there are plenty in the coops, and those of the best kind, I can assure you."

Finding himself thus ably seconded, Marmaduke pushed his advantage to the utmost. He entered into a detail of the duties that would attend the situation, and circumstantially mentioned the reward, and all those points which are deemed of importance

among men of business. The youth listened in extreme agitation. There was an evident contest in his feelings; at times he appeared to wish eagerly for the change, and then again, the incomprehensible expression of disgust would cross his handsome features, like a dark cloud obscuring a noon-day sun.

The Indian, in whose manner the depression of self-abasement was most powerfully exhibited, listened to the offers of the Judge, with an interest that increased with each syllable. Gradually he drew nigher to the group, and when, with his keen glance, he had detected the most marked evidence of yielding in the countenance of his young companion, he changed at once from his attitude and look of shame, to the fearless and proud front of an Indian warrior, and moving, with great dignity, close to the parties, he spoke in his turn.

"Listen to your Father," he said, "for his words are old. Let the Young Eagle and the Great Land Chief eat together; let them sleep, without fear, near to each other. The children of Miquon love not blood; they are just, and will do right. The sun must rise

and set often, before men can make one family: it is not the work of a sun, but of many winters. The Mingoes and the Delawares are born enemies; their blood can never mix in the wigwam; it never will run in the same stream in the battle. What makes the brother of Miquon and the Young Eagle foes! they are of the same tribe; their fathers and mothers are one. Learn to wait, my son: you have Delaware blood, and an Indian warrior knows how to be patient."

This figurative address seemed to have great weight with the young man, who gradually yielded to the representations of Marmaduke, and eventually consented to his proposal. It was, however, to be an experiment only; and if either of the parties thought fit to rescind the engagement, it was left at his option so to do. The remarkable and ill-concealed reluctance of the youth, to accept of an offer, which most men in his situation would consider as an unhoped-for elevation, occasioned no little surprise in those of the spectators to whom he was a stranger; and it left a slight impression to his disadvantage. When the parties separated, they very natu-

rally made the subject the topic of a conversation, which we will relate; first commencing with the Judge, his daughter, and Richard, who were slowly pursuing the way back to the Mansion-house.

"I have surely endeavoured to remember the holy mandates of our Redeemer, when he bids us to 'love them who despitefully use you,' in my intercourse with this incomprehensible boy," said Marmaduke. "I know not what there is in my dwelling, to frighten a lad of his years, unless it may be thy presence and visage, Bess."

"No, no," said Richard, with great simplicity in his manner; "it is not cousin Bess. But when did you ever know a half-breed, 'duke, who could bear civilization? for that matter, they are worse than the savages themselves. Did you notice how knock-kneed he stood, Elizabeth, and what a wild look he had in his eyes?"

"I observed not his eyes, sir," returned the maiden, "nor his knees, which would be all the better for a little humbling. Really, my dear sir, I think you did exercise the Christian virtue of patience to the utmost.

I was disgusted with his airs, long before he consented to make one in our family. Truly, we are much honoured by the association! In what apartment is he to be placed, sir, and at what table is he to receive his nectar and ambrosia?"

"With Benjamin and Remarkable," interrupted Mr. Jones; "you surely would not make the youth eat with the blacks! He is part Indian, it is true, but the natives hold the negroes in great contempt. No, no—he would starve before he would break a crust with the negroes."

"I am but too happy, Dickon, to tempt him to eat with ourselves," said Marmaduke, "to think of offering even the indignity you propose."

"Then, sir," said Elizabeth, with an air that was slightly affected, as if submitting to her father's orders in opposition to her own will, "it is your pleasure that he be a gentleman."

"Certainly; he is to fill the station of one; let him receive the treatment that is due to his place, until we find him unworthy of it."

"Well, well, 'duke," cried the Sheriff;

"you will find it no easy matter to make a gentleman of him. The old proverb says, 'that it takes three generations to make a gentleman.' There was my father, whom every body knew; my grandfather was an M.D.; and his father a D.D.; and his father came from England. I never could come at the truth of his origin, but he was either a great merchant, in London, or a great country lawyer."

"Here is a true American genealogy for you," said Marmaduke, laughing. "It does very well, till you get across the water, where, as every thing is obscure, it is certain to deal in the superlative. You are sure that your English progenitor was great, Dickon, whatever his profession might be?"

"To be sure I am," returned the other; "I have heard my old aunt talk of him by the month. We are of a good family, Judge Temple, and have never filled any but honourable stations in life."

"I marvel that you should be satisfied with so scanty a provision of gentility, in the olden time, Dickon. Most of the American gene-

alogists commence their traditions, like the stories for children, with three brothers, taking especial care that one of the triumvirate shall be the progenitor of any of the same name who may happen to be better furnished with worldly gear than themselves. But, here, all are equal who know-how to conduct themselves with propriety; and Oliver Edwards comes into my family, on a footing with both the High Sheriff and the Judge."

"Well, 'duke, I call this democracy, not republicanism; but I say nothing; only let him keep within the law, or I shall show him, that the freedom of even this country is under wholesome restraint."

"Surely, Dickon, you will not execute till I condemn," said Marmaduke. "But what says Bess to the new inmate. We must pay a deference to the ladies, in this matter, after all."

"Oh! sir," returned Elizabeth, "I believe I am much like a certain Judge Temple, in this particular; not easily to be turned from my opinion. But, to be serious, although I must think the introduction of a demi-savage into the family a somewhat startling event,

whomsoever you think proper to countenance, may be sure of my respect."

The Judge drew her arm more closely in his own, and smiled, while Richard led the way through the gate of the little court-yard in the rear of the dwelling, dealing out his ambiguous warnings, with his accustomed loquacity.

On the other hand, the foresters, for the three hunters, notwithstanding their great difference in character, well deserved this common name, pursued their course along the skirts of the village in silence. It was not until they had reached the lake, and were moving over its frozen surface, towards the foot of the mountain, where their hut stood, that the youth exclaimed—

"Who would have foreseen this, a month since! I have consented to serve Marmaduke Temple! to be an inmate in the dwelling of the greatest enemy of my race! yet what better could I do? The servitude cannot be long, and when the motive for submitting to it ceases to exist, I will shake it off, like the dust from my feet."

"Is he a Mingo, that you call him enemy?"

said Mohegan. "The Delaware warrior sits still, and waits the time of the Great Spirit. He is no woman, to cry out like a child."

"Well, I'm mistrustful, John," said Leather-stocking, in whose air there had been, during the dialogue, a strong expression of doubt and uncertainty. "They say that there's new laws in the land, and I am sartain that there's new ways in the mountains. They alter the country so much, one hardly knows the lakes and streams. I must say I'm mistrustful of such smooth speakers, for I've known the whites talk fair, when they wanted the Indian lands most. This I will say, though I'm white myself, and was born nigh York, and of honest parents too."

"I will submit," said the youth; "I will forget who I am. Cease to remember, old Mohegan, that I am the descendant of a Delaware chief, who once was master of these noble hills, these beautiful vales, and of this water, over which we tread. Yes, yes—I will become his bondsman—his slave! Is it not an honourable servitude, old man?"

"Old man!" repeated the Indian, solemnly, and pausing in his walk, as usual when much

excited—"yes; John is old. Son of my brother! if Mohegan was young, when would his rifle be still? where would the deer hide, and he not find him? But John is old; his hand is the hand of a squaw; his tomahawk is a hatchet; brooms and baskets are his enemies —he strikes no other. Hunger and old age come together.—See, Hawkeye! when young, he would go days, and eat nothing; but should he not put the brush on the fire now, the blaze would go out. Take the son of Miquon by the hand, and he will help you."

"I'm not the man I was, I'll own, Chingachgook," returned the Leather-stocking; "but I can go without a meal now, on occasion. When we tracked the Iroquois through the 'Beech-woods,' they druv the game before them, for I hadn't a morsel to eat from Monday morning, come Wednesday sundown; and then I shot as fat a buck, on the Pennsylvany line, as you ever laid eyes on. It would have done your heart raal good to have seen the Delawares eat,—for I was out scouting and scrimmaging with their tribe, at the very time. Lord! the Indians, lad, lay still, and just waited till Providence should

send them their game; but I foraged about, and put a deer up, and put him down too, 'fore he had made a dozen jumps. I was too weak, and too ravenous to stop for his flesh; so I took a good drink of his blood, and the Indians eat of his meat raw. John was there, and John knows. But then starvation would be apt to be too much for me now, I will own, though I'm no great eater at any time."

"Enough is said, my friends," cried the youth; "I feel that everywhere the sacrifice is required at my hands, and it shall be made; but say no more, I entreat you; I cannot bear the subject now."

His companions were silent, and they soon reached the hut, which they entered, after removing certain complicated and ingenious fastenings, that were put there, apparently, to guard a property of but very little value. Immense piles of snow lay against the log walls of this secluded habitation, on one side, while fragments of small trees, and branches of oak and chestnut, that had been torn from their parent stems by the winds, were thrown into a pile, on the other. A small column of smoke rose through a chimney of sticks, ce-

mented with clay, along the side of the rock; and had marked the snow above with its dark tinges, in a wavy line, from the point of emission to another where the hill receded from the brow of a precipice, and held a soil that nourished trees of a gigantic growth, that overhung the little bottom beneath.

The remainder of the day passed off as such days are commonly spent, in a new country. —The settlers thronged to the academy again, to witness the second effort of Mr. Grant; and Mohegan was one of his hearers. But, notwithstanding the divine fixed his eyes intently on the Indian, when he invited his congregation to advance to the table, the shame of last night's abasement was yet too keen in the old chief to suffer him to move.

When the people were dispersing, the clouds, that had been gathering all the morning, were dense and dirty; and before half of the curious congregation had reached their different cabins, that were placed in every glen and hollow of the mountains, or perched on the summits of the hills themselves, the rain was falling in torrents. The dark edges of the stumps began to exhibit themselves, as

the snow settled rapidly; the fences of logs and brush, which before had been only traced by the long lines of white mounds, that ran across the valley and up the mountains, peeped out in spots, from their light covering; and the black stubs were momentarily becoming more distinct, as large masses of snow and ice fell from their sides, under the influence of the thaw.

Sheltered in the warm hall of her father's comfortable mansion, Elizabeth, accompanied by Louisa Grant, looked abroad with admiration at the ever-varying face of things without. Even the village, which had just before been glittering with the colour of the frozen element, reluctantly dropped its mask, and the houses exposed their dark roofs and smoked chimnies. The pines shook off their covering of snow, and every thing seemed to be assuming its proper hue, with a rapidity of transition that bordered on the supernatural.

CHAPTER VII.

"And yet, poor Edwin was no vulgar boy."
Beattie.

THE close of Christmas day, A. D. 1793, was tempestuous, but comparatively warm. When darkness had again hid the objects in the village from the gaze of Elizabeth, she turned from the window, where she had remained so long as the least vestige of light lingered over the tops of the dark pines, with a curiosity that was rather excited than appeased by the passing glimpses of woodland scenery that she had caught during the day.

With her arm locked in that of Miss Grant, the young mistress of the mansion walked slowly up and down the hall, musing on scenes that were rapidly recurring to her memory, and possibly dwelling, at times, in the sanctuary of her thoughts, on the strange occurrences that had led to the introduction to her father's family of one, whose manners

so singularly contradicted the inferences to be drawn from his situation. The expiring heat of the apartment, for its great size required a day to reduce its temperature, had given to her cheeks a richness of bloom that exceeded their natural colour, while even the mild and melancholy features of Louisa were brightened with a faint tinge, that, like the hectic glow of disease, gave a painful interest to her beauty.

The eyes of the gentlemen, who were yet seated around the rich wines of Judge Temple, frequently wandered from the table, that was placed at one end of the hall, to the lovely forms that were silently moving over its length. Much mirth, and that, at times, of a boisterous kind, proceeded from the mouth of Richard; but Major Hartmann was not yet excited to his pitch of merriment, and Marmaduke respected the presence of his clerical guest too much, to indulge in even the innocent humour that formed no small ingredient in his character. Vulgarity over the bottle, was an embellishment of some fifteen years later date.

Such were, and such continued to be, the

pursuits of the party, for half an hour after the shutters were closed, and candles were placed in various parts of the hall, as substitutes for the departing daylight. The appearance of Benjamin, staggering under the burthen of an armful of wood, was the first interruption to the scene.

"How now, Master Pump!" roared the newly-appointed Sheriff; "is there not warmth enough in 'duke's best Madeira, to keep up the animal heat through this thaw? Remember, old boy, that the Judge is particular with his beech and maple, beginning to dread, already, a scarcity of the precious articles. Ha! ha! ha! 'duke, you are a good, warm-hearted relation, I will own, as in duty bound, but you have some queer notions about you, after all. 'Come let us be jolly, and cast away folly.'"—

The notes gradually sunk into a hum, while the Major-domo threw down his load, and turning to his interrogator with an air of exquisite earnestness, he replied—

"Why, look you, Squire Dickens, mayhap there's a warm latitude round about the table there, thof it's not the stuff to raise the heat in

my body neither; the raal Jamaiky being the only thing to do that, beside good wood, or some such matter as Newcastle coal. But if I know any thing of weather, d'ye see, it's time to be getting all snug, and for putting the ports in, and stirring the fires abit. Mayhap I've not followed the seas twenty-seven years, and lived another seven in these here woods, for nothing, gemmen."

"Why, does it bid fair for a change in the weather, Benjamin?" inquired the master of the house.

"There's a shift of wind, your honour," returned the steward; "and when there's a shift of wind, you may look for a change, in this here climate. I was aboard of one of Rodney's fleet d'ye see, about the time we licked De Grasse, Mounsheer Ler Quaw's countryman, there; and the wind was here at the south'ard and east'ard; and I was below, mixing a toothful of hot-stuff for the Captain of marines, who dined, d'ye see, in the cabin, that there very same day; and I suppose he wanted to put out the Captain's fire with a gun-room ingyne: and so, just as I got it to my own liking, after tasting pretty often, for

the soldier was difficult to please, slap, come the foresail ag'inst the mast, and whiz, went the ship round on her heel, like a whirlygig. And a lucky thing was it that our helm was down; for as she gathered starnway she payed off, which was more than every ship in the fleet did, or could do. But she strained herself in the trough of the sea, and she shipped a deal of water over her quarter. I never swallowed so much clear water at a time, in my life, as I did then, for I was looking up the after-hatch at the instant."

"I wonder, Benjamin, that you did not die with a dropsy!" said Marmaduke.

"I mought, Judge," said the old tar, with a broad grin; "but there was no need of the med'cine chest for a cure; for, as I thought the brew was spoilt for the marine's taste, and there was no telling when another sea might come and spoil it for mine, I finished the mug on the spot. So then all hands was called to the pumps, and there we began to ply the pumps——"

"Well, but the weather?" interrupted Marmaduke; "what of the weather without doors!"

"Why, here the wind has been all day at the south, and now there's a lull, as if the last blast was out of the bellows; and there's a streak along the mountain, to the north'ard, that, just now, wasn't wider than the bigness of your hand; and then the clouds drive afore it as you'd brail a mainsail, and the stars are heaving in sight, like so many lights and beacons, put there to warn us to pile on the wood; and, if-so-be that I'm a judge of weather, it's getting to be time to build on a fire; or you'll have half of them there porter-bottles, and them dimmy-johns of wine, in the locker here, breaking with the frost, afore the morning watch is called."

"Thou art a prudent sentinel," said the Judge. "Act thy pleasure with the forests, for this night at least."

Benjamin did as he was ordered; nor had two hours elapsed, before the prudence of his precautions became very visible. The south wind had, indeed, blown itself out, and it was succeeded by the calmness that usually gave warning of a serious change in the weather. Long before the family retired to rest, the cold had become cuttingly severe; and when

Monsieur Le Quoi sallied forth, under a bright moon, to seek his own abode, he was compelled to beg a blanket, in which he might envelope his form, in addition to the numerous garments that his sagacity had provided for the occasion. The divine and his daughter remained, as inmates of the Mansion-house, during the night, and the excess of last night's merriment induced the gentlemen to make an early retreat to their several apartments. Long before midnight, the whole family were invisible.

Elizabeth and her friend had not yet lost their senses in sleep, when the howlings of the north-west wind were heard around the buildings, and brought with them that exquisite sense of comfort, that is ever excited under such circumstances, in an apartment where the fire has not yet ceased to glimmer, and curtains, and shutters, and feathers, all unite to preserve the desired temperature in the air. Once, just as her eyes had opened, apparently in their last stage of drowsiness, the roaring of the winds brought on them a long and plaintive howl, that seemed too wild for a dog, and yet strongly resembled the

cries of that faithful animal, when night awakens his vigilance, and gives sweetness and solemnity to his alarms. The form of Louisa Grant seemed instinctively to press nearer to that of the young heiress, who, finding her companion to be yet awake, said, in a low tone, as if afraid to break a charm with her voice—

"Those distant cries are plaintive, and even beautiful. Can they be the hounds from the hut of Leather-stocking?"

"They are wolves, who have ventured from the mountain, on the lake," whispered Louisa, "and who are only kept from the village by the lights. One night, since we have been here, hunger drove them to our very doors. Oh! what a dreadful night it was! But the riches of Judge Temple have given him too many safeguards, to leave room for fear in this house."

"The enterprise of Judge Temple is taming the very forests!" exclaimed Elizabeth, proudly, throwing off the covering, and partly rising in the bed. "How rapidly is civilization treading on the footsteps of nature!" she continued, as her eye glanced over not

only the comforts, but the luxuries of her apartment, and her ear again listened to the distant, but often repeated howls from the lake. Finding, however, that the timidity of her companion rendered the sounds painful to her, Elizabeth resumed her place by her side, and soon forgot, not only the changes in the country, but those, also, in her own condition, in a deep sleep.

The following morning, the noise of the female servant, who entered the apartment to light their fire, awoke the young maidens, who form such conspicuous subjects in our tale. They arose, and finished the slight preparations of their toilettes in a clear, cold atmosphere, that penetrated through all the defences of even Miss Temple's warm room. When Elizabeth was attired, she approached a window and drew its curtain, and, throwing open its shutters, she endeavoured to look abroad on the village and the lake. But a thick covering of frost, on the panes of glass, while it admitted the light, hid the view. She raised the sash, and then, indeed, a most glorious scene met her delighted eye.

The lake had exchanged its covering of

unspotted snow, for a face of dark ice, that reflected the rays of the rising sun, like a polished mirror. The houses were clothed in a dress of the same description, but which, owing to its position, shone like bright steel; while the enormous icicles that were pendent from every roof, caught the brilliant light, apparently throwing it from one to the other, as each glittered, on the side next to the luminary, with a golden lustre, that melted away, on its opposite, into the dusky shades of a back-ground. But it was the appearance of the boundless forests, that covered the hills, as they rose, in the distance, one over the other, that most attracted the gaze of Miss Temple. The huge branches of the pines and hemlocks, on the western mountains, bent with the weight of the ice that they supported, while their summits rose above the swelling tops of the oaks, beeches, and maples, like spires of burnished silver issuing from domes of the same material. The limits of the view, in this direction, were marked by an undulating outline of bright light, as if, reversing the order of nature,

numberless suns might momentarily be expected to heave above the western horizon. In the foreground of the picture, along the shores of the lake, and near to the village, each tree seemed studded with diamonds, that emitted their dancing rays, as the branches waved gently under the impulse of the wind. Even the sides of the mountains, where the rays of the sun could not yet fall, were decorated with a glassy coat, that presented every gradation of brilliancy, from the first touch of the luminary to the dark foliage of the hemlock, as it glistened through its coat of crystal. In short, the whole view was one scene of quivering radiancy, as lake, mountains, village, and woods, each emitted its portion of light, tinged with its peculiar hue, and varied by its position and its magnitude.

"See!" cried Elizabeth—"see, Louisa; hasten to the window, and observe the miraculous change."

Miss Grant complied; and, after bending for a moment in silence from the opening, she observed, in a low tone, as if afraid to trust the sound of her voice—

"The change is indeed wonderful! I am surprised that he should be able to effect it so soon."

Elizabeth turned in amazement, to hear such a sceptical sentiment from one educated like her companion; but was surprised to find that, instead of looking at the view, the mild, blue eyes of Miss Grant were dwelling on the form of a well-dressed young man, who was standing before the door of the building, in earnest conversation with her father. A second look was necessary, before she was able to recognize the person of the young hunter, in a plain, but, assuredly, the ordinary garb of a gentleman.

"Every thing in this magical country seems to border on the marvellous," said Elizabeth; "and among all the changes, this is certainly not the least wonderful. I am not surprised that your eye caught this transformation, without noticing the changes in the view. The actors are as unique as the scenery."

Miss Grant coloured highly, and drew in her head, as she answered—

"I am a simple girl, Miss Temple, and

I am afraid you will find me but a poor companion.—I—I am not sure that I understand all that you say. But I really thought that you wished me to notice the alteration in Mr. Edwards. Is it not more wonderful, when we recollect his origin? They say he is part Indian."

"He is certainly a genteel savage," returned the smiling Elizabeth. "But let us go down, and give the Sachem his tea;—for I suppose he is a descendant of King Philip, if not a grandson of Pocahontas."

The ladies were met in the hall by Judge Temple, who took his daughter aside, to apprise her of that alteration in the appearance of their new inmate, with which she was already acquainted.

"He appears reluctant to converse on his former situation," continued Marmaduke; "but I gather from his discourse, as is apparent from his manner, that he has seen better days; and I really am inclining to the opinion of Richard, as to his origin; for it was no unusual thing for the Indian Agents to rear their children in a very laudable manner, and ——"

"Very well, my dear sir," interrupted his daughter, laughing, and averting her eyes; "it is all well enough, I dare say; but as I do not understand a word of the Mohawk language, he must be content to speak English; and as for his behaviour, I trust to your discernment to control it."

"Ay! but, Bess," said the Judge, detaining her gently, with his hand, "nothing must be said to him of his past life. This he has begged particularly of me, as a favour. He is, perhaps, a little soured, just now, with his wounded arm; but the injury seems very light, and another time he may be more communicative."

"Oh! I am not much troubled, sir, with that laudable thirst after knowledge, that is called curiosity. I shall believe him to be the child of Corn-stalk, or Corn-planter, or some other renowned chieftain; possibly of the Big Snake himself; and shall treat him as such, until he sees fit to shave his good-looking head, borrow some half-dozen pair of my best ear-rings, shoulder his rifle again, and disappear as suddenly as he made his entrance. So come, my dear sir, and let us not

forget the rites of hospitality, for the short time he is to remain with us."

Judge Temple smiled, at the graceful playfulness of his child, and taking her arm, they entered the breakfast parlour, where the young hunter was seated, with an air that showed his determination to domesticate himself in the family, with as little parade as possible.

Such were the incidents that led to this extraordinary increase in the family of Judge Temple, where, having once established the youth, the subject of our tale requires us to leave him, for a time, to pursue with diligence and intelligence the employments that were assigned him by Marmaduke.

Major Hartmann made his customary visit, and took his leave of the party, for the next three months. Mr. Grant was compelled to be absent much of his time, in remote parts of the county, and his daughter became almost a constant visitor at the Mansion-house. Richard entered, with his constitutional eagerness, on the duties of his new office; and, as Marmaduke was much employed, with the constant applications of adventurers, for farms, the winter passed swiftly away.

The lake was a principal scene for the amusements of the young people; where the ladies, in their one-horse cutter, driven by Richard, and attended, when the snow would admit of it, by young Edwards, on his skates, spent many hours, taking the benefit of exercise in the clear air of the hills. The reserve of the youth gradually gave way to time and his situation, though it was still evident, to a close observer, that he had frequent moments of bitter and intense feeling.

Elizabeth saw many large openings appear in the sides of the mountains, during the three succeeding months, where different settlers had, in the language of the country, "made their pitch;" while the numberless sleighs that passed through the village, loaded with wheat and barrels of potashes, afforded a clear demonstration that all these labours were not undertaken in vain. In short, the whole country was exhibiting the bustle of a thriving settlement, where the highways were thronged with sleighs, bearing piles of rough household furniture, studded, here and there, with the smiling faces of women and children, happy in the excitement of novelty; or with

loads of produce, hastening to the common market at Albany, that served as so many snares, to induce the emigrants to enter into those wild mountains in search of competence and happiness.

The village was alive with business, the artisans increasing in wealth with the prosperity of the country, and each day witnessing some nearer approach to the manners and usages of an old-settled town. The man who carried the mail, or the post, as he was called, talked much of running a stage, and once or twice, during the winter, he was seen taking a single passenger in his cutter, through the snow-banks towards the Mohawk, along which a regular vehicle glided, semi-weekly, with the velocity of lightning, and under the direction of a knowing whip from the "down countries." Towards spring, divers families, who had been into the "old states," to see their relatives, returned, in time to save the snow, frequently bringing with them whole neighbourhoods, who were tempted by their representations to leave the farms of Connecticut and Massachusetts, and make a trial in the woods for fortune.

During all this time, Oliver Edwards, whose sudden elevation excited no surprise in that changeful country, was earnestly engaged in the service of Marmaduke, during the days; but his nights were often spent in the hut of Leather-stocking. The intercourse between the three hunters was maintained with a certain air of mystery, it is true, but with much zeal and apparent interest to all the parties. Even Mohegan seldom came to the Mansion-house, and Natty, never; but Edwards sought every leisure moment to visit his former abode, from which he would often return in the gloomy hours of night, through the snow, or if detained beyond the time at which the family retired to rest, with the morning sun. These visits certainly excited much speculation in those to whom they were known, but no comments were made, excepting occasionally in whispers from Richard, who would say—

"It is not at all remarkable;—a half-breed can never be weaned from the savage ways, any more than a full-blooded Indian."

CHAPTER VIII.

> " Away ! nor let me loiter in my song,
> For we have many a mountain path to tread."
>
> *Byron.*

As the spring gradually approached, the immense piles of snow, that, by alternate thaws and frosts, and constant accumulation, had obtained a firmness that threatened a tiresome durability, begun to yield to the influence of milder breezes and a warmer sun. The gates of Heaven, at times, seemed to open, and a bland air diffused itself over the earth, when animate and inanimate nature would awaken, and, for a few hours, the gaiety of spring shone in every eye, and smiled on every field. But the shivering blasts from the north would carry their chill influence over the scene again, and the dark and gloomy clouds that interposed themselves to the rays of the sun, were not more cold and dreary, than the re-action which crossed the creation. These struggles between the sea-

sons became, daily, more frequent, while the earth, like a victim to contention, slowly lost the animated brilliancy of winter, without obtaining the decided aspect of spring.

Several weeks were consumed, in this cheerless manner, during which the inhabitants of the country gradually changed their pursuits from the social and bustling movements of the time of snow, to the laborious and domestic engagements of the coming season. The village was no longer thronged with visitors; the trade, that had enlivened the shops for several months, begun to disappear; the highways lost their shining coats of beaten snow in impassable sloughs, and were deserted by the gay and noisy travellers, who, in sleighs, had, during the winter, glided along their windings; and, in short, every thing seemed indicative of a mighty change, not only in the earth itself, but in those, also, who derived their sources of comfort and happiness from her bosom.

The younger members of the family in the Mansion-house, of which Louisa Grant was now habitually one, were by no means indifferent observers of these fluctuating and tardy

changes. So long as the snow rendered the roads passable, they had partaken largely in the amusements of the winter, which included not only daily rides over the mountains, and through every valley within twenty miles of them, but divers ingenious and varied sources of pleasure, on the bosom of their frozen lake. There had been rides in the equipage of Richard, when, with his four horses, he had outstripped the winds with its speed, as it flew over the glassy ice which invariably succeeded a thaw. Then the exciting and dangerous "whirligig" would be suffered to possess its moment of notice. Cutters, drawn by a single horse, and hand-sleds, impelled by the gentlemen, on skaits, would each in their turn be used; and, in short, every source of relief against the tediousness of a winter in the mountains, was resorted to by the family; so that, with the aid of a library of well-chosen books, Elizabeth was willing to acknowledge to her father, that the season was much less irksome than she had anticipated.

As exercise in the open air was, in some degree, necessary to the habits of the family,

when the constant recurrence of frosts and thaws rendered the roads, which were dangerous, at the most favourable times, utterly impassable for wheels, saddle-horses were used as substitutes for their other conveyances. Mounted on small and sure-footed beasts, the ladies would again attempt the passages of the mountains, and penetrate into every retired glen, where the enterprise of a settler had induced him to establish himself. In these excursions they were attended by some one or all of the gentlemen of the family, as their different pursuits admitted. Young Edwards was hourly becoming more familiarized to his situation, and not unfrequently mingled in their parties, with an unconcern and gaiety, that, for a short time, would, apparently, expel all unpleasant recollections from his mind. Habit, and the buoyancy of youth, seemed to be getting the ascendancy over the secret causes of his uneasiness; though there were moments, when the same remarkable expression of disgust, would cross his intercourse with Marmaduke, that had distinguished their conversations in the first days of their acquaintance.

It was at the close of the month of March, that the Sheriff succeeded in persuading his cousin and her young friend to accompany him in a ride to a hill, that was said to overhang the lake, in a manner peculiar to itself.

"Besides, cousin Bess," continued the indefatigable Richard, "we will stop and see the 'sugar bush' of Billy Kirby: he is on the east end of the Ransom lot, making sugar for Jared Ransom. There is not a better hand over a kettle in the county, than that same Kirby. You remember, 'duke, that I had him his first season, in our own camp; and it is not a wonder that he knows something of his trade."

"He's a good chopper, is Billy," observed Benjamin, who held the bridle of the horse while the Sheriff mounted; "and he handles an axe, much the same as a forecastle-man does his marling-spike, or a tailor his goose. They say he'll lift a potash-kettle off the arch with his hands, thof I can't say that I've ever seen him do it with my own eyes; but that is the say. And I've seen sugar of his making, which, maybe, wasn't as white as an old top-gallant-sail, but which my friend Mis-

tress Pretty-bones, within there, said, had the true molasses smack to it; and you are not the one, Squire Dickens, to be told that Mistress Remarkable has a remarkable tooth for sweet things in her nut-grinder."

The loud laugh that succeeded the wit of Benjamin, and in which he participated, with no very harmonious sounds, himself, very fully illustrated the congenial temper which existed between the pair. Most of its point was, however, lost on the rest of the party, who were either mounting their horses, or assisting the ladies to do so, at the moment. When all were safely in their saddles, the whole moved through the village in great order. They paused for a moment, before the door of Monsieur Le Quoi, until he could bestride his steed, and then, issuing from the little cluster of houses, they took one of the principal of the highways, that centered in the village.

As each night brought with it a severe frost, which the heat of the succeeding day served to dissipate, the equestrians were compelled to proceed singly, along the margin of

the road, where the turf, and firmness of the ground, gave their horses a secure footing. Very trifling indications of approaching vegetation were to be seen, the surface of the earth presenting a cold, wet, and cheerless aspect, that almost chilled the blood of the spectator. The snow yet lay scattered over most of those distant clearings that were visible in different parts of the mountains; though here and there an opening might be seen, where, as the white covering yielded to the season, the bright and lively green of the wheat served to enkindle the hopes of the husbandman. Nothing could be more marked, than the contrast between the earth and the heavens; for, while the latter presented the dreary view that we have described, a warm and invigorating sun was dispensing his heats from a sky that contained but a solitary cloud, that lingered near the mountain; and through an atmosphere that softened the colours of the sensible horizon, until it shone like a sea of virgin blue.

Richard led the way, on this, as on all other occasions, that did not require the

exercise of unusual abilities; and as he moved along, he essayed to enliven the party with the sounds of his experienced voice.

"This is your true sugar weather, 'duke," he cried; "a frosty night, and a sunshiny day. I warrant me that the sap runs like a mill-tail up the maples, this warm morning. It is a pity, Judge, that you do not introduce a little more science into the manufacture of sugar, among your tenants. It might be done, sir, without knowing as much as Dr. Franklin—it might be done, Judge Temple."

"The first object of my solicitude, friend Jones," returned Marmaduke, "is to preserve the sources of this great mine of comfort and wealth, from the extravagance of the people themselves. When this important point shall be achieved, it will be in season to turn our attention to an improvement in the manufacture of the article. But thou knowest, Richard, that I have already subjected our sugar to the process of the refiner, and that the result has produced loaves as white as the snow on yon fields, and possessing the saccharine quality in its utmost purity."

"Saccharine, or turpentine, or any other -ine, Judge Temple, you have never made a loaf larger than a good sized sugar-plum," returned the Sheriff. "Now, sir, I assert, that no experiment is fairly tried, until it be reduced to practical purposes. If, sir, I owned a hundred, or, for that matter, two hundred thousand acres of land, as you do, I would build a sugar-house in the village; I would invite learned men to an investigation of the subject,—and such are easily to be found, sir; yes, sir, they are not difficult to find,—men who unite theory with practice; and I would select a wood of young and thrifty trees; and instead of making loaves of the size of a lump of candy, dam'me, 'duke, but I'd have them as big as a hay-cock."

"And purchase the cargo of one of those ships that, they say, are going to China," cried Elizabeth; "turn your potash-kettles into tea-cups, the scows on the lake into saucers; bake your cake in yonder lime-kiln, and invite the county to a tea-party. How wonderful are the projects of genius! Really, sir, the world is of opinion that Judge Temple has tried the experiment fairly, though

he did not cause his loaves to be cast in moulds of the magnitude that would suit your magnificent conceptions."

"You may laugh, cousin Elizabeth—you may laugh, madam," retorted Richard, turning himself so much in his saddle as to face the party, and making extremely dignified gestures with his whip; "but I appeal to common sense, good sense, or, what is of more importance than either, to the sense of taste, which is one of the five natural senses, whether a big loaf of sugar is not likely to contain a better illustration of a proposition, than such a lump as one of your Dutch women puts under her tongue when she drinks her tea. There are two ways of doing every thing; the right way, and the wrong way. You make sugar now, I will admit, and you may, possibly, make loaf-sugar; but I take the question to be, whether you make the best possible sugar, and into the best possible loaves."

"Thou art very right, Richard," observed Marmaduke, with a gravity in his air, that proved how much he was interested in the subject. "It is very true that we manufac-

ture sugar, but the inquiry is quite useful to make, how much? and in what manner? I hope to live to see the day, when farms and plantations will be devoted to this branch of business. Little is known concerning the properties of the tree itself, the source of all this wealth; how much it may be improved by cultivation, by the use of the hoe and plough."

"Hoe and plough!" roared the Sheriff;—"would you set a man hoeing round the root of a maple like this,"—pointing to one of those noble trees, that occur so frequently in that part of the country.—"Hoeing trees! are you mad, 'duke? This is next to hunting for coal! Poh! poh! my dear cousin, hear reason, and leave the management of the sugar-bush to me. Here is Mr. Le Quoi, he has been in the West Indies, and seen sugar made often. Let him give an account of how it is made there, and you will hear the philosophy of the thing.—Well, Monsieur, how is it that you make sugar in the West-Indies; any thing in Judge Temple's fashion?"

The gentleman to whom this query was

put, was mounted on a small horse, of no very fiery temperament, and was riding with his stirrups so short, as to bring his knees, while the animal rose a small ascent in the wood-path they were now travelling, into a somewhat hazardous vicinity to his chin. There was no room for gesticulation or grace in the delivery of his reply, for the mountain was steep and slippery; and although the Gaul had an eye of uncommon magnitude on either side of his face, they did not seem to be half competent to forewarn him of the impediments of bushes, twigs, and fallen trees, that were momentarily crossing his path. With one hand employed in averting these dangers, and the other grasping his bridle, to check an untoward speed that his horse was assuming, the native of France responded as follows:—

"Sucre! dey do make eet in Martinique: mais—mais, eet is not from von tree; eet is from—ah—ah—vat you call—Je voudrois que ces chemins fussent au diable—vat you call—von steeck pour le promenade."

"Cane," said Elizabeth, smiling at the

imprecation which the wary Frenchman supposed was understood only by himself.

" Oui, Mam'selle, cane."

" Yes, yes," cried Richard, "cane is the vulgar name for it, but the real term is saccharum officinarum: as for what we call the sugar, or hard maple, it is acer saccharinum. These are the learned names, Monsieur, and are such as, doubtless, you well understand."

"Is this Greek or Latin, Mr. Edwards?" whispered the heiress to the youth, who was opening a passage for herself and her companion through the bushes—" or perhaps it is a still more learned language, for an interpretation of which we must look to you."

The dark eye of the young man glanced towards the maiden, with a keenness bordering on ferocity; but its expression changed, in a moment, to the smiling playfulness of her own face, as he answered—

" I will remember your doubts, Miss Temple, when next I visit my old friend Mohegan, and either his skill, or that of Leather-stocking, shall solve them."

" And are you, then, really ignorant of

their language?" asked Elizabeth, with an impetuosity that spoke a lively interest in the reply.

"Not absolutely; but the deep learning of Mr. Jones is more familiar to me, or even the polite masquerade of Monsieur Le Quoi."

"Do you speak French?" said the lady, with a quickness that equalled her former interest.

"It is a common language with the Iroquois, and through the Canadas," he answered, with an equivocal smile.

"Ah! but they are Mingoes, and your enemies."

"It will be well for me, if I have no worse," said the youth, dashing ahead with his horse, and thus putting an end to the evasive dialogue.

The discourse, however, was maintained with great vigour by Richard, until they reached an open wood on the summit of the mountain, where the hemlocks and pines totally disappeared, and a grove of the very trees that formed the subject of debate, covered the earth with their tall, straight trunks and spreading branches, in stately pride.

The impediments of the underwood had been entirely removed from this grove, or bush, as, in conjunction, with the simple arrangements for boiling, it was called, so as to leave a wide space of many acres, which might be likened to the dome of a mighty temple, to which the maples, with their stems, formed the columns, their tops composed the capitals, and the heavens the arch. A deep and careless incision had been made into each tree, near its root, into which little spouts, formed of the bark of the alder, or of the sumach, were fastened; and a trough, roughly dug out of the linden, or bass-wood, was lying at the root of each tree, to catch the sap that flowed from this extremely wasteful and inartificial arrangement.

The party paused a moment, on gaining the flat, to breathe their horses, and, as the scene was entirely new to several of their number, to view the manner of collecting the fluid. A fine, powerful voice aroused them from their momentary silence, as it rung under the branches of the trees, singing the following words of that inimitable doggrel, whose verses, if extended, would reach from

the waters of the Connecticut to the shores of Ontario. The tune was, of course, that familiar air, which, although it is said to have been first applied to his nation in derision, circumstances have since rendered so glorious, that no American ever hears its jingling cadence without feeling a thrill at his heart.

"The Eastern States be full of men,
The Western full of woods, sir;
The hills be like a cattle pen,
The roads be full of goods, sir:
Then flow away, my sweety sap,
And I will make you boily;
Nor catch a woodman's hasty nap,
For fear you should get roily.

"The maple tree's a precious one,
'Tis fuel, food, and timber;
And when your stiff day's work is done,
Its juice will make you limber.
Then flow away, &c.

"And what's a man without his glass,
His wife without her tea, sir?
But neither cup nor mug would pass,
Without this honey-bee, sir.
Then flow away," &c.

During the execution of this sonorous ditty, Richard kept time with his whip on the mane of his charger, accompanying the gestures with a corresponding movement of his head and body. Towards the close of the song, he was overheard humming the chorus, and at its last repetition, to strike in at "sweety sap," and carry a second through, with a prodigious addition to the "effect" of the noise, if not to that of the harmony.

"Well done us!" roared the Sheriff, on the same key with the tune; "a very good song, Billy Kirby, and very well sung. Where got you the words, lad? is there more of it, and can you furnish me with a copy?"

The sugar-boiler, who was busy in his "camp," at a short distance from the equestrians, turned his head with a most philosophical indifference, and surveyed the party, as they approached, with admirable coolness. To each individual, as he or she rode close by him, he gave a nod, that was extremely good-natured and affable, but which partook largely of the virtue of equality; for not even to the ladies did he in the least vary his mode of salutation, by touching the apology for a

hat that he wore, or by any other motion than the one we have mentioned.

" How goes it, how goes it, Sheriff?" said the wood-chopper; " what's the good word to-day?"

" Why, much as usual, Billy," returned Richard. " But how is this! where are your four kettles, and your troughs, and your iron coolers? Do you make sugar in this slovenly way? I thought you were one of the best sugar-boilers in the county."

" I'm all that, Squire Jones," said Kirby, while he still continued his occupation; "I'll turn my back to no man in the Otsego hills, for chopping and logging; for boiling down the maple sap; for tending brick-kiln; splitting out rails; making potash, and parling too; or hoeing corn. Though I keep myself, pretty much to the first business, seeing that the axe comes most nateral to me."

" You be von Jack All-trade, Mister Beel," said Monsieur Le Quoi.

" How?" said Kirby, looking up, with a simplicity, which, coupled with his gigantic frame and manly face, was a little ridiculous.— " If you be for trade, Mounsher, here is some

as good sugar as you'll find the season through. It's as clear from dirt as the Garman Flats is from stumps, and it has the raal maple flavour. Such stuff would sell in York for candy."

The Frenchman approached the place where Kirby had deposited his cakes of sugar, under the cover of a bark roof, and commenced the examination of the article, with the eye of one who well understood its value. Marmaduke had dismounted, and was viewing the works and the trees very closely, and not without frequent expressions of dissatisfaction, at the careless manner in which the manufacture was conducted.

"You have much experience in these things, Kirby," he said; "what is the course you pursue in making your sugar? I see that you have but two kettles."

"Two is as good as two thousand, Judge; I'm none of your polite sugar-makers, that boils for the great folks; but if the raal sweet maple is wanted, I can answer your turn. First, I choose, and then I tap my trees; say along about the last of February, or, in these mountains, maybe not afore the middle of

March; but any way, just as the sap begins to cleverly run——"

"Well, in this choice," interrupted Marmaduke, "are you governed by any outward signs, that prove the quality of the tree?"

"Why, there's judgment in all things," said Kirby, stirring the liquor in his kettles briskly. "There's something in knowing when and how much to stir the pot. It's a thing that must be larnt. Rome was'nt built in a day, nor, for that matter, Templetown 'ither, though it may be said to be a quick-growing place. I never put my axe into a stunty tree, or one that hasn't a good, fresh-looking bark; for trees have disorders just like creaturs; and where's the policy of taking a tree that's sickly, any more than you'd choose a foundered horse to ride post, or an over-heated ox to do your logging——"

"All this is true; but what are your signs of illness? how do you distinguish a tree that is well from one that is diseased?"

"How does the doctor tell who has fever, and who colds?" interrupted Richard—"by examining the skin, and feeling the pulse to be sure."

"Sartain," continued Billy; "the Squire a'nt far out of the way. It's by the look of the thing, sure enough.—Well, when the sap begins to get a free run, I hang over the kettles, and set up the bush. My first boiling I push pretty smart, till I get the vartoo of the sap; but when it begins to grow of a molasses nater, like this in the kettle, one mus'nt drive the fires too hard, or you'll burn the sugar; and burny sugar is always bad to the taste, let it be never so sweet. So you ladle out from one kettle into the other, till it gets so, when you put the stirring-stick into it, that it will draw into a thread; when it takes a kerful hand to manage it. There is a way to drain it off, after it has grained, by putting clay into the pans; but it isn't always practysed: some doos, and some doosn't.—Well, Mounsher, be we likely to make a trade?"

"I vill give you, Mister Beel, for von pound—dix sous."

"No; I expect cash for't; I never dicker away my sugar. But, seeing that it's you, Mounsher," said Billy, with a coaxing smile, "I'll agree to take a gallon of rum, and cloth enough for two shirts, if you will take the

molasses in the bargain. It's raal good. I wouldn't deceive you or any man; and to my drinking, it's about the best molasses I ever seed come out of a sugar-bush."

"Mr. Le Quoi has offered you ten pence," said young Edwards.

The manufacturer stared at the speaker, with an air of great freedom, but made no reply.

"Oui," said the Frenchman, "ten penny. Je vous remercie, Monsieur; ah! mon Anglois! je l'oublie toujours."

The wood-chopper looked from one to the other, with some displeasure; and evidently imbibed the opinion that they were amusing themselves at his expense. He seized the enormous ladle, which was lying in one of his kettles, and began to stir the boiling liquid with great diligence. After a moment, passed in dipping the ladle full, and then raising it on high, as the thick, rich fluid fell back into the kettle, he suddenly gave it a whirl, as if to cool what yet remained in it, and offered the bowl to Mr. Le Quoi, saying—

"Taste that, Mounsher, and I guess you will say it is worth more than you offer.

The molasses itself would fetch twice the money."

The complaisant Frenchman, after several timid efforts to trust his lips in contact with the bowl of the ladle, got a good swallow of the scalding liquid. He clapped his hand on his breast, and looked most piteously at the ladies, for a single instant, and then, to use the language of Billy, when he afterwards recounted the tale, "no drumsticks ever went faster on the skin of a sheep, than the Frenchman's legs, for a round or two: and then, such swearing and spitting, in French, you never seen. But it's a knowing one, from the old countries, that thinks to get his jokes smoothly over a Yankee wood-chopper."

The air of innocence with which Kirby resumed his occupation of stirring the contents of his kettle, would have completely deceived the spectators, as to his agency in the temporary suffering of Mr. Le Quoi, had not the reckless fellow thrust his tongue into his cheek, and cast his eyes over the party, with a simplicity of expression that was too exquisite to be true to nature. Mr. Le Quoi soon recovered his presence of mind, and his

decorum; he briefly apologized to the ladies for one or two very intemperate expressions, that had escaped him in a moment of extraordinary excitement, and remounting his horse, he continued in the back-ground during the remainder of their visit, the wit of Kirby putting a violent termination, at once, to all negotiations on the subject of trade. During all this time, Marmaduke had been wandering about the grove, making his observations on his favourite trees, and the wasteful manner in which the wood-chopper conducted his manufacture.

"It grieves me to witness the extravagance that pervades this country," said the Judge, "where the settlers trifle with the blessings they might enjoy, with the prodigality of successful adventurers. You are not exempt from the censure yourself, Kirby, for you make dreadful wounds in these trees, when a small incision would effect the same object. I earnestly beg you will remember, that they are the growth of centuries, and when once gone, none living will see their loss remedied."

"Why, I don't know, Judge," returned the man he addressed: "It seems to me, if there's a plenty of any thing in this mountaynous

country, it's the trees. If there's any sin in chopping them, I've a pretty heavy account to settle; for I've chopped over the best half of a thousand acres, with my own hands, counting both Varmount and York states; and I hope to live to finish the whull, before I lay up my axe. Chopping comes quite nateral to me, and I wish no other employment; but Jared Ransom said that he thought the sugar was likely to be scurce this season, seeing that so many folks was coming into the settlement, and so I concluded to take the 'bush' on sheares, for this one spring. What's the best news, Judge, concarning ashes? do pots hold so that a man can live by them still? I s'pose that they will if they keep on fighting."

"Thou reasonest with judgment, William," returned Marmaduke. "So long as the old world is to be convulsed with wars, so long will the harvest in America continue."

"Well, it's an ill wind, Judge, that blows nobody no good. I'm sure the country is in a thriving way; and, though I know you kalkilate greatly on the trees, setting as much store by them as some men would by their children, yet, to my eyes, they are a sore sight at any time, unless I'm privileged to

work my will on them; in which case, I can't say but they are more to my liking. I have heern the settlers from the old countries say, that their rich men keep great oaks and elms, that would make a barrel of pots to the tree, standing round their doors and humsteads, and scattered over their farms, just to look on. Now, I call no country much improved, that is pretty well covered with trees. Stumps are a different thing, for they don't shade the land; and besides, if you dig them, they make a fence that will turn any thing bigger than a hog, being grand for breachy cattle."

"Our notions on such subjects vary much, in different countries," said Marmaduke; "but it is not as ornaments that I value the noble trees of this country; it is for their usefulness. We are stripping the forests, as if a single year would replace what we destroy. But the hour approaches, when the laws will take notice of not only the woods, but the game they contain also."

With this consoling reflection, Marmaduke remounted, and the equestrians passed the sugar-camp, on their way to the promised landscape of Richard. The wood-chopper was left alone, in the bosom of the forest, to

pursue his labours. Elizabeth turned her head, when they reached the point where they were to descend the mountain, and thought that his slow fires, that were glimmering under his enormous kettles, his little brush shelter, covered with pieces of hemlock bark, his gigantic size, as he wielded his ladle with a steady and knowing air, aided by the back-ground of stately trees, with their spouts and troughs, formed, altogether, no unreal picture of human life in its first stages of civilization. Perhaps whatever the scene possessed of a romantic character was not injured by the powerful tones of Kirby's voice, ringing through the woods, as he again awoke his strains to another tune, which was but little more scientific than the former. All that she understood of the words, were—

"And when the proud forest is falling,
To my oxen cheerfully calling,
From morn until night I am bawling,
  Woe, back there, and hoy and gee;
Till our labour is mutually ended,
By my strength and cattle befriended,
And against the musquitoes defended,
  By the bark of the walnut tree—

"Away! then, you lads who would buy land,
Choose the oak that grows on the high land,
Or the silvery pine on the dry land,
  It matters but little to me."

CHAPTER IX.

"Speed! Malise, speed! such cause of haste
Thine active sinews never brac'd."

Scott.

THE roads of Otsego, if we except the principal highways, were, at the early day of our tale, but little better than wood-paths of unusual width. The high trees that were growing on the very verge of the wheel-tracks, excluded the sun's rays, except when at meridian, and the slowness of the evaporation, united with the rich mould of vegetable decomposition, that covered the whole county, to the depth of several inches, occasioned but an indifferent foundation for the footing of travellers. Added to these, there were the ups and downs of a natural surface, and the constant recurrence of enormous and slippery roots, laid bare by the removal of the light soil, together with stumps of trees, to make a passage not only difficult, but dangerous. Yet the riders, among these numerous obstruc-

tions, which were such as would terrify an unpractised eye, gave no demonstrations of uneasiness, as their horses toiled through the sloughs, or trotted with uncertain paces along their dark route. In many places, the marks on the trees were the only indications of a road, with, perhaps, an occasional remnant of a pine, that, by being cut close to the earth, so as to leave nothing visible but its base of roots, spreading for twenty feet in every direction, was apparently placed there as a beacon, to warn the traveller that it was the centre of the highway.

Into one of these roads the active Sheriff led the way, first striking out of the footpath, by which they had descended from the sugar-bush, across a little bridge, formed of round logs laid loosely on sleepers of pine, in which large openings were frequent, and, in one instance, of a formidable width. The nag of Richard, when it reached this barrier, laid its nose along the logs, and stepped across the difficult passage with the sagacity of a man; but the blooded filly which Miss Temple rode disdained so humble a movement. She made a step or two with an unusual caution, and

then, on reaching the broadest opening, obedient to the curb and whip of her fearless mistress, she bounded across the dangerous pass, with the activity of a squirrel.

"Gently, gently, my child," said Marmaduke, who was following in the manner of Richard—"this is not a country for equestrian feats. Much prudence is requisite, to journey through our rough paths with safety. Thou mayst practise thy skill in horsemanship on the plains of New Jersey, with safety, but in the hills of Otsego, they must be suspended for a time."

"I may as well, then, relinquish my saddle at once, dear sir," returned his daughter; "for if it is to be laid aside until this wild country be improved, old age will overtake me, and put an end to what you term my equestrian feats."

"Say not so, my child," returned her father; "but if thou venturest again, as in crossing this bridge, old age will never overtake thee, but I shall be left to mourn thee, cut off in thy pride, my Elizabeth. If thou hadst seen this district of country, as I did, when it lay in the sleep of nature, and wit-

nessed its rapid changes, as it awoke to supply the wants of man, thou wouldst curb thy impatience for a little time, though thou should not curb thy steed."

"I have a remembrance of hearing you speak, sir, of your first visit to these woods, but the recollection of it is faint, and blended with the confused images of childhood. Wild and unsettled as it may yet seem, it must have been a thousand times more dreary then. Will you repeat, dear sir, what you then thought of your enterprise, and what you felt?"

During this speech of Elizabeth, which was uttered with the interested fervour of affection, young Edwards rode more closely to the side of the Judge, and bent his dark eyes on his countenance, with an expression that seemed to read his thoughts.

"Thou wast then young, my child, but must remember when I left thee and thy mother, to take my first survey of these uninhabited mountains," said Marmaduke. "But thou dost not feel all the secret motives that can urge a man to endure privations in order to accumulate wealth. In my case they have

not been trifling, and God has been pleased to smile on my efforts. If I have encountered pain, famine, and disease, in accomplishing the settlement of this rough territory, I have not the misery of failure to add to the grievances."

"Famine!" echoed Elizabeth; "I thought this was the land of abundance! had you famine to contend with?"

"Even so, my child," said her father. "Those who look around them now, and see the loads of produce that issue out of every wild path in these mountains, during the season of travelling, will hardly credit that no more than five years have elapsed, since the tenants of these woods were compelled to eat the scanty fruits of the forest to sustain life, and, with their unpractised skill, to hunt the beasts as food for their starving families."

"Ay!" cried Richard, who happened to overhear the last of this speech, between the notes of the wood-chopper's song, which he was endeavouring to breathe aloud; "that was the starving-time, cousin Bess. I grew as lank as a weasel that fall, and my face was as pale as one of your fever-and-ague visages.

Monsieur Le Quoi, there, fell away like a pumpkin in drying; nor do I think you have got fairly over it yet, Monsieur. Benjamin, I thought, bore it with a worse grace than any of the family, for he swore it was harder to endure than a short allowance in the calm latitudes. Benjamin is a sad fellow to swear, if you starve him ever so little. I had half a mind to quit you then, 'duke, and go into Pennsylvania to fatten; but, damn it, thinks I, we are sisters' children, and I will live or die with him, after all."

"I do not forget thy kindness," said Marmaduke, "nor that we are of one blood."

"But, my dear father," cried the wondering Elizabeth, "was there actual suffering? where were the beautiful and fertile vales of the Mohawk? could not they furnish food for your wants?"

"It was a season of scarcity; the necessities of life commanded a high price in Europe, and were greedily sought after by the speculators. The emigrants, from the east to the west, invariably passed along the valley of the Mohawk, and swept away the means of subsistence, like a swarm of locusts.

Nor were the people on the Flats in a much better condition. They were in want themselves, but they spared the little excess of provisions, that nature did not absolutely require, with the justice of the German character. There was no grinding of the poor. The word speculator was then unknown to them. I have seen many a stout man, bending under the load of the bag of meal, which he was carrying from the mills of the Mohawk, through the rugged passes of these mountains, to feed his half-famished children, with a heart so light, as he approached his hut, that the thirty miles he had passed seemed nothing. Remember, my child, it was in our very infancy: we had neither mills, nor grain, nor roads, nor often clearings;—we had nothing of increase, but the mouths that were to be fed; for, even at that inauspicious moment, the restless spirit of emigration was not idle; nay, the general scarcity, which extended to the east, tended to increase the number of adventurers."

"And how, dearest father, didst thou encounter this dreadful evil?" said Elizabeth, unconsciously adopting the dialect of her parent, in the warmth of her sympathy.

"Upon thee must have fallen all the responsibility, if not the suffering."

"It did, Elizabeth," returned the Judge, pausing for a single moment, as if musing on his former feelings. "I had hundreds, at that dreadful time, daily looking up to me for bread. The sufferings of their families, and the gloomy prospect before them, had paralysed the enterprise and efforts of my settlers; hunger drove them to the woods for food, but despair sent them, at night, enfeebled and wan, to a sleepless pillow. It was not a moment for inaction. I purchased cargoes of wheat from the granaries of Pennsylvania; they were landed at Albany, and brought up the Mohawk in boats; from thence it was transported on pack-horses into the wilderness, and distributed amongst my people. Seines were made, and the lakes and rivers were dragged for fish. Something like a miracle was wrought in our favour, for enormous schools of herring were discovered to have wandered five hundred miles, through the windings of the impetuous Susquehanna, and the lake was alive with their numbers. These were at length caught, and dealt out to the people,

with proper portions of salt; and from that moment, we again began to prosper."

"Yes," cried Richard, "and I was the man who served out both the fish and the salt; and when the poor devils came to receive their rations, Benjamin, who was my deputy, was obliged to keep them off by stretching ropes around me, for they smelt so of garlic, from eating nothing but the wild onion, that the fumes put me out, often, in my measurement. You were a child then, Bess, and knew nothing of the matter, for great care was observed to keep both you and your mother from suffering. That year put me back, dreadfully, both in the breed of my hogs, and of my turkeys."

"No, Bess," cried the Judge, in a more cheerful tone, utterly disregarding the interruption of his cousin, "he who hears of the settlement of a country, knows but little of the actual toil and suffering by which it is accomplished. Unimproved and wild as this district now seems to your eyes, what was it when I first entered the hills! I left my party, the morning of my arrival, back near the farms of the Cherry Valley, and, follow-

ing a deer-path, rode to the summit of the mountain, that I have since called Mount Vision; for the sight that there met my eyes seemed to me as the deceptions of a dream. The fire had run over the pinnacle, and, in a great measure, laid open the view. The leaves were fallen, and I mounted a tree, and sat for an hour looking on the silent wilderness. Not an opening was to be seen in the boundless forest, except where the lake lay, like a mirror of glass. The water was covered bymy riads of the wild-fowl that migrate with the changes in the season; and, while in my situation on the branch of the beech, I saw a bear, with her cubs, descend to the shore to drink. I had met many deer, gliding through the woods, in my journey; but not the vestige of a man could I trace, during my progress, nor from my elevated observatory. No clearing, no hut, none of the winding roads that are now to be seen, were there; nothing but mountains rising back of mountains, and the valley, with its surſace of branches, enlivened here and there with the faded foliage of some tree, that parted from its leaves with more than ordinary reluctance. Even the little

Susquehanna was then hid, by the height and density of the forest."

"And were you there alone?" asked Elizabeth;—"passed you the night in that solitary state?"

"Not so, my child," returned her father. "After musing on the view for an hour, with a mingled feeling of pleasure and desolation, I left my perch, and descended the mountain. My horse was left to browse on the twigs that grew within his reach, while I explored the shores of the lake, and the spot where Templeton stands. A pine of more than ordinary growth stood where my dwelling is now placed, and a wind-row had been opened through the trees from thence to the lake, so that my view was but little impeded. Under the branches of that tree I made my solitary dinner; and I had just finished my repast as I saw a smoke curling from under the mountain, near the east bank of the lake. It was the only indication of the vicinity of man that I had then seen. After much toil, I made my way to the spot, and found a rough cabin of logs, built against the foot of a rock, and bearing the marks of a tenant, though I found none within it.—"

" It was the hut of Leather-stocking," said Edwards, quickly.

" It was; though I had, at first, supposed it to be a habitation of the Indians. But while I was lingering around the spot, Natty made his appearance, staggering under the load of the carcass of a buck that he had slain. Our acquaintance commenced at that time; before, I had never heard that such a being tenanted the woods. He launched his bark canoe, and set me across the foot of the lake, to the place where I had fastened my horse, and pointed out a spot where he might get a scanty browsing until the morning; and I returned and passed the night in the cabin of the hunter."

Miss Temple was so much struck by the deep attention of young Edwards, during this speech, that she forgot to resume her interrogatories; but the youth himself continued the discourse, by asking, with something like a smile lurking around his features—

" And how did the Leather-stocking discharge the duties of a host, sir?"

" Why, simply but kindly, until late in the evening, when he discovered my name and object, and the cordiality of his manner very

sensibly diminished, or, I might better say, disappeared. He considered the introduction of the settlers as an innovation on his rights, I believe; for he expressed much dissatisfaction at the measure, though in his confused and ambiguous manner. I hardly understood his objections myself, but suppose they referred chiefly to an interruption of the hunting."

"Had you then purchased the estate, or were you examining it with an intent to buy?" asked Edwards, a little abruptly.

It had been mine for several years. It was with a view to people the land that I visited the lake. Natty treated me hospitably, but coldly, I thought, after he learnt the nature of my journey. I slept on his own bear-skin, however, and in the morning joined my surveyors again."

"Said he nothing of the Indian rights, sir?" continued Edwards. "The Leather-stocking is much given to impeach the justice of the tenure by which the whites hold the country."

"I remember that he spoke of them, but I did not clearly comprehend him, and may

have forgotten what he then said; for the Indian title was extinguished so far back as the close of the old war; and if it had not been at all, I hold under the patents of the Royal Governors, confirmed by an act of our own State Legislature, so that no court in our country can affect my title."

"Doubtless, sir, your title is both legal and equitable," returned the youth, coldly, reining his horse back, and remaining silent till the subject was changed.

It was seldom that Mr. Jones suffered any conversation to continue, for a great length of time, without his participation. It seems that he was of the party that Judge Temple had designated as his surveyors; and he embraced the opportunity of the pause that succeeded the retreat of young Edwards, to take up the discourse, and with it a narration of their further proceedings, after his own manner. As it wanted, however, the deep interest that had accompanied the description of the Judge, we must decline the task of committing his sentences to paper.

They soon reached the point where the promised view was to be seen. It was one

of those picturesque and peculiar scenes, that belong to the Otsego, but which required the absence of the ice, and the softness of a summer's landscape, to be enjoyed in all its beauty. Marmaduke had early forewarned his daughter of the season, and of its effect on the prospect, so that after casting a cursory glance at its capabilities, the party returned homeward, perfectly satisfied that its beauties would repay them for the toil of a second ride, at a more propitious season.

"The spring is the gloomy time of the American year," said the Judge; "and it is more peculiarly the case in these mountains. The winter seems to retreat to the fastnesses of the hills, as to the citadel of its dominion, and is only expelled, after a tedious siege, in which either party, at times, would seem to be gaining the victory."

"A very just and apposite figure, Judge Temple," observed the Sheriff; "and the garrison under the command of Jack Frost make formidable sorties—you understand what I mean by sorties, Monsieur; sallies, in English—and sometimes drive General Spring

and his troops back again into the low countries."

"Yes, sair," returned the Frenchman, whose prominent eyes were watching the precarious footsteps of the beast he rode, as it picked its dangerous way among the roots of trees, holes, log-bridges, and sloughs, that formed the aggregate of the highway. "Je vous entend; de low countrie, it ees freeze up for half de year."

The error of Mr. Le Quoi was not observed by the Sheriff; and the rest of the party were yielding to the influence of the changeful season, that was already teaching the equestrians that a continuance of its mildness was not to be expected for any length of time. Silence and thoughtfulness succeeded the gaiety and conversation that had prevailed during the commencement of their ride, as clouds began to gather about the heavens, apparently collecting from every quarter, in quick motion, without the agency of a breath of air.

While riding over one of the cleared eminences that occurred in their route, the

watchful eye of Judge Temple pointed out to his daughter the approach of a tempest. Flurries of snow already obscured the mountain that formed the northern boundary of the lake, and the genial sensation which had quickened the blood through their veins, was already succeeded by the deadening influence of an approaching *north-wester*.

All of the party were now busily engaged in making the best of their way to the village, though the badness of the roads frequently compelled them to check the impatience of their horses, which often carried them over places that would not admit of any gait faster than a walk.

Richard continued in advance, and was followed by Mr. Le Quoi; next to whom rode Elizabeth, who seemed to have imbibed the distance which pervaded the manner of young Edwards, since the termination of the discourse between the latter and her father. Marmaduke followed his daughter, giving her frequent and tender warnings, as to her safety, and the management of her horse. It was, possibly, the evident dependence that Louisa Grant placed on his assistance, which

induced the youth to continue by her side, as they pursued their way through a dreary and dark wood, where the rays of the sun could but rarely penetrate, and where even the day-light was obscured and rendered gloomy by the deep forests that surrounded them. No wind had yet reached the spot where the equestrians were in motion, but that dead stillness that often precedes a storm, contributed to render their situation more irksome than if they were already subjected to the fury of the tempest. Suddenly the voice of young Edwards was heard shouting, in those appalling tones that carry alarm to the very soul, and which curdle the blood of him who hears them—

" A tree! a tree! whip—spur for your lives! a tree! a tree!"

" A tree! a tree!" echoed Richard, giving his horse a blow, that caused the alarmed beast to jump nearly a rod, throwing the mud and water into the air, like a hurricane.

" Von tree! von tree!" shouted the Frenchman, bending his body on the neck of his charger, shutting his eyes, and playing on the ribs of his beast with his heels, at a

rate that caused him to be conveyed, on the crupper of the Sheriff, with a marvellous speed.

Elizabeth checked her filly, and looked up, with an unconscious but alarmed air, at the very cause of their danger, as she listened to the crackling sounds that awoke the stillness of the forest; but at the next instant her bridle was seized by her father, who cried—

"God protect my child!" and she felt herself hurried onward, impelled by the vigour of his nervous arm.

Each one of the party bowed to their saddle-bows, as the tearing of branches was succeeded by a sound like the rushing of the winds, which was followed by a thundering report, and a shock that caused the very earth to tremble, as one of the noblest ruins in the forest fell directly across their path.

One glance was enough to assure Judge Temple that his daughter, and those in front of him, were safe, and he turned his eyes, in dreadful anxiety, to learn the fate of the others. Young Edwards was on the opposite side of the tree, with his form thrown

back in his saddle to its utmost distance, his left hand drawing up his bridle with its greatest force, while the right grasped that of Miss Grant, so as to draw the head of her horse under its body. Both the animals stood shaking in every joint with terror, and snorting fearfully. The maiden herself had relinquished her reins, and with her hands pressed on her face, sat bending forward in her saddle in an attitude of despair mingled strangely with resignation.

"Are you safe?" cried the Judge, first breaking the awful silence of the moment.

"By God's blessing," returned the youth; "but if there had been branches to the tree, we must have been lost——"

He was interrupted by the figure of Louisa, slowly yielding in her saddle; and but for his arm, she would have sunken to the earth. Terror, however, was the only injury that the clergyman's daughter had sustained, and, with the aid of Elizabeth, she was soon restored to her senses. After some little time was lost in recovering her strength, the young lady was replaced in her saddle, and, supported on either side, by Judge Temple

and Mr. Edwards, she was enabled to follow the party in their slow progress.

"The sudden falling of the trees," said Marmaduke, "are the most dangerous of our accidents in the forest, for they are not to be foreseen, being impelled by no winds, nor any extraneous or visible cause, against which we can guard."

"The reason of their falling, Judge Temple, is very obvious," said the Sheriff. "The tree is old and decayed, and it is gradually weakened by the frosts, until a line drawn from the centre of gravity falls without its base, and then the tree comes of a certainty; and I should like to know, what greater compulsion there can be for any thing, than a mathematical certainty. I studied mathe——"

"Very true, Richard," interrupted Marmaduke; "thy reasoning is true, and, if my memory be not over treacherous, was furnished by myself, on a former occasion. But how is one to guard against the danger? Canst thou go through the forests, measuring the bases, and calculating the centres

of the oaks? Answer me that, friend Jones, and I will say thou wilt do the country a service."

"Answer thee that, friend Temple!" returned Richard; "a well-educated man can answer thee any thing, sir. Do any trees fall in this manner, but such as are decayed? Take care not to approach the roots of any rotten trees, and you will be safe enough."

"That would be excluding us entirely from the forests," said Marmaduke. "But, happily, the winds usually force down most of these dangerous ruins, as their currents are admitted into the woods by the surrounding clearings, and such a fall as this has been is very rare."

Louisa, by this time, had recovered so much of her strength, as to allow the party to proceed at a quicker pace; but long before they were safely housed, they were overtaken by the storm; and when they dismounted at the door of the Mansion-house, the black plumes in Miss Temple's hat were drooping with the weight of a load of damp snow, and the coats of the gentlemen were powdered with the same material.

While Edwards was assisting Louisa from her horse, the warm-hearted girl caught his hand with fervour, and whispered—

"Now, Mr. Edwards, both father and daughter owe their lives to you."

A driving, north-westerly storm succeeded; and before the sun was set, every vestige of spring had vanished; the lake, the mountains, the village, and the fields, being again hid under one dazzling coat of snow.

CHAPTER X.

> " Men, boys, and girls,
> Desert th' unpeopled village; and wild crowds
> Spread o'er the plain, by the sweet frenzy driven."
>
> *Somerville.*

From this time to the close of April, the weather continued to be a succession of great and rapid changes. One day, the soft airs of spring would seem to be stealing along the valley, and, in unison with an invigorating sun, attempting, covertly, to rouse the dormant powers of the vegetable world; while on the next, the surly blasts from the north would sweep across the lake, and erase every impression left by their gentle adversaries. The snow, however, finally disappeared, and the green wheat fields were seen in every direction, spotted with the dark and charred stumps that had, the preceding season, supported some of the proudest trees of the forest. Ploughs were in motion, wherever

In this wish both Marmaduke and young Edwards seemed equally to participate, for really the sight was most exhilarating to a sportsman; and the ladies soon dismissed the party, after a hasty breakfast.

If the heavens were alive with pigeons, the whole village seemed equally in motion, with men, women, and children. Every species of fire-arms, from the French ducking-gun, with its barrel of near six feet in length, to the common horseman's pistol, was to be seen in the hands of the men and boys; while bows and arrows, some made of the simple stick of a walnut sapling, and others in a rude imitation of the ancient cross-bows, were carried by many of the latter.

The houses, and the signs of life apparent in the village, drove the alarmed birds from the direct line of their flight, towards the mountains, along the sides and near the bases of which they were glancing in dense masses, that were equally wonderful by the rapidity of their motion, as by their incredible numbers.

We have already said, that across the inclined plane which fell from the steep ascent of the mountain to the banks of the Susque-

hanna, ran the highway, on either side of which a clearing of many acres had been made, at a very early day. Over those clearings, and up the eastern mountain, and along the dangerous path that was cut into its side, the different individuals posted themselves, as suited their inclinations; and in a few moments the attack commenced.

Amongst the sportsmen was to be seen the tall gaunt form of Leather-stocking, who was walking over the field, with his rifle hanging on his arm, his dogs following close at his heels, now scenting the dead or wounded birds, that were beginning to tumble from the flocks, and then crouching under the legs of their master, as if they participated in his feelings, at this wasteful and unsportsmanlike execution.

The reports of the fire-arms became rapid, whole volleys rising from the plain, as flocks of more than ordinary numbers darted over the opening, covering the field with darkness, like an interposing cloud; and then the light smoke of a single piece would issue from among the leafless bushes on the mountain, as death was hurled on the retreat of the af-

frighted birds, who would rise from a volley, for many feet into the air, in a vain effort to escape the attacks of man. Arrows, and missiles of every kind, were seen in the midst of the flocks; and so numerous were the birds, and so low did they take their flight, that even long poles, in the hands of those on the sides of the mountain, were used to strike them to the earth.

During all this time, Mr. Jones, who disdained the humble and ordinary means of destruction used by his companions, was busily occupied, aided by Benjamin, in making arrangements for an assault of a more than ordinarily fatal character. Among the relics of the old military excursions, that occasionally are discovered throughout the different districts of the western part of New-York, there had been found in Templeton, at its settlement, a small swivel, which would carry a ball of a pound weight. It was thought to have been deserted by a war-party of the whites, in one of their inroads into the Indian settlements, when, perhaps, their convenience or their necessities induced them to leave such an encumbrance to the rapidity

of their march, behind them in the woods. This miniature cannon had been released from the rust, and mounted on little wheels, in a state for actual service. For several years, it was the sole organ for extraordinary rejoicings that was used in those mountains. On the mornings of the fourth of July, it would be heard, with its echoes ringing among the hills, and telling forth its sounds, for thirteen times, with all the dignity of a two-and-thirty pounder; and even Captain Hollister, who was the highest authority in that part of the country on all such occasions, affirmed that, considering its dimensions, it was no despicable gun for a salute. It was somewhat the worse for the service it had performed, it is true, there being but a trifling difference in size between the touch-hole and the muzzle. Still, the grand conceptions of Richard had suggested the importance of such an instrument, in hurling death at his nimble enemies. The swivel was dragged by a horse into a part of the open space, that the Sheriff thought most eligible for planting a battery of the kind, and Mr. Pump proceeded to load it. Several handfuls of duck-

shot were placed on top of the powder, and the Major-domo soon announced that his piece was ready for service.

The sight of such an implement collected all the idle spectators to the spot, who, being mostly boys, filled the air with their cries of exultation and delight. The gun was pointed on high, and Richard, holding a coal of fire in a pair of tongs, patiently took his seat on a stump, awaiting the appearance of a flock that was worthy of his notice.

So prodigious was the number of the birds, that the scattering fire of the guns, with the hurling of missiles, and the cries of the boys, had no other effect than to break off small flocks from the immense masses that continued to dart along the valley, as if the whole creation of the feathered tribe were pouring through that one pass. None pretended to collect the game, which lay scattered over the fields in such profusion, as to cover the very ground with the fluttering victims.

Leather-stocking was a silent, but uneasy spectator of all these proceedings, but was able to keep his sentiments to himself until he saw the introduction of the swivel into the sports.

"This comes of settling a country!" he said—"here have I known the pigeons to fly for forty long years, and, till you made your clearings, there was nobody to scare or to hurt them. I loved to see them come into the woods, for they were company to a body; hurting nothing; being, as it was, as harmless as a garter-snake. But now it gives me sore thoughts when I hear the frighty things whizzing through the air, for I know it's only a motion to bring out all the brats in the village at them. Well! the Lord won't see the waste of his creaters for nothing, and right will be done to the pigeons, as well as others, by-and-by.—There's Mr. Oliver, as bad as the rest of them, firing into the flocks as if he was shooting down nothing but the Mingo warriors."

Among the sportsmen was Billy Kirby, who, armed with an old musket, was loading, and, without even looking into the air, was firing, and shouting as his victims fell even on his own person. He heard the speech of Natty, and took upon himself to reply—

"What's that, old Leather-stocking!" he cried; "grumbling at the loss of a few pigeons! If you had to sow your wheat

twice, and three times, as I have done, you wouldn't be so massyfully feeling'd to'ards the divils.—Hurrah, boys! scatter the feathers. This is better than shooting at a turkey's head and neck, old fellow."

"It's better for you, maybe, Billy Kirby," returned the indignant old hunter, "and all them as don't know how to put a ball down a rifle-barrel, or how to bring it up ag'in with a true aim; but it's wicked to be shooting into flocks in this wastey manner; and none do it, who know how to knock over a single bird. If a body has a craving for pigeon's flesh, why! it's made the same as all other creaters, for man's eating, but not to kill twenty and eat one. When I want such a thing, I go into the woods till I find one to my liking, and then I shoot him off the branches without touching a feather of another, though there might be a hundred on the same tree. But you couldn't do such a thing, Billy Kirby—you couldn't do it if you tried."

"What's that you say, you old, dried corn-stalk! you sapless stub!" cried the wood-chopper. "You've grown mighty boasting, sin' you killed the turkey; but if you're for a

single shot, here goes at that bird which comes on by himself."

The fire from the distant part of the field had driven a single pigeon below the flock to which it had belonged, and, frightened with the constant reports of the muskets, it was approaching the spot where the disputants stood, darting first from one side, and then to the other, cutting the air with the swiftness of lightning, and making a noise with its wings, not unlike the rushing of a bullet. Unfortunately for the wood-chopper, notwithstanding his vaunt, he did not see his bird until it was too late for him to fire as it approached, and he pulled his trigger at the unlucky moment when it was darting immediately over his head. The bird continued its course with incredible velocity.

Natty had dropped his piece from his arm, when the challenge was made, and waiting a moment, until the terrified victim had got in a line with his eyes, and had dropped near the bank of the lake, he raised his rifle with uncommon rapidity, and fired. It might have been chance, or it might have been skill, that produced the result; it was probably a union

of both; but the pigeon whirled over in the air, and fell into the lake, with a broken wing. At the sound of his rifle, both his dogs started from his feet, and in a few minutes the "slut" brought out the bird, still alive.

The wonderful exploit of Leather-stocking was noised through the field with great rapidity, and the sportsmen gathered in to learn the truth of the report.

"What," said young Edwards, "have you really killed a pigeon on the wing, Natty, with a single ball?"

"Haven't I killed loons before now, lad, that dive at the flash?" returned the hunter. "It's much better to kill only such as you want, without wasting your powder and lead, than to be firing into God's creaters in such a wicked manner. But I come out for a bird, and you know the reason why I like small game, Mr. Oliver, and now I have got one I will go home, for I don't like to see these wasty ways that you are all practysing, as if the least thing was not made for use, and not to destroy."

"Thou sayest well, Leather-stocking," cried

Marmaduke, "and I begin to think it time to put an end to this work of destruction."

"Put an ind, Judge, to your clearings. An't the woods his work as well as the pigeons? Use, but don't waste. Wasn't the woods made for the beasts and birds to harbour in? and when man wanted their flesh, their skins, or their feathers, there's the place to seek them. But I'll go to the hut with my own game, for I wouldn't touch one of the harmless things that kiver the ground here, looking up with their eyes at me, as if they only wanted tongues to say their thoughts."

With this sentiment in his mouth, Leatherstocking threw his rifle over his arm, and, followed by his dogs, stepped across the clearing with great caution, taking care not to tread on one, of the hundreds of the wounded birds that lay in his path. He soon entered the bushes on the margin of the lake, and was hid from view.

Whatever might be the impression the morality of Natty made on the Judge, it was utterly lost on Richard. He availed himself of the gathering of the sportsmen, to lay a plan for one "fell swoop" of destruction. The

musket-men were drawn up in battle array, in a line extending on each side of his artillery, with orders to await the signal of firing from himself.

"Stand by, my lads," said Benjamin, who acted as an aid-de-camp on this momentous occasion, "stand by, my hearties, and when Squire Dickens heaves out the signal for to begin the firing, d'ye see, you may open upon them in a broadside. Take care and fire low, boys, and you'll be sure to hull the flock."

"Fire low!" shouted Kirby—"hear the old fool! If we fire low, we may hit the stumps, but not ruffle a pigeon."

"How should you know, you lubber?" cried Benjamin, with a very unbecoming heat, for an officer on the eve of battle—"how should you know, you grampus? Haven't I sailed aboard of the Boadishy for five years? and wasn't it a standing order to fire low, and to hull your enemy? Keep silence at your guns, boys, and mind the order that is passed."

The loud laughs of the musketmen were silenced by the authoritative voice of Richard,

who called to them for attention and obedience to his signals.

Some millions of pigeons were supposed to have already passed, that morning, over the valley of Templeton; but nothing like the flock that was now approaching had been seen before. It extended from mountain to mountain in one solid blue mass, and the eye looked in vain over the southern hills to find its termination. The front of this living column was distinctly marked by a line, but very slightly indented, so regular and even was the flight. Even Marmaduke forgot the morality of Leather-stocking as it approached, and, in common with the rest, brought his musket to his shoulder.

"Fire!" cried the Sheriff, clapping his coal to the priming of the cannon. As half of Benjamin's charge escaped through the touch-hole, the whole volley of the musketry preceded the report of the swivel. On receiving this united discharge of small-arms, the front of the flock darted upward, while, at the same instant, myriads of those in their rear rushed with amazing rapidity into their places, so that when the column of white

smoke gushed from the mouth of the little cannon, an accumulated mass of objects was gliding over its point of direction. The roar of the gun echoed along the mountains, and died away to the north, like distant thunder, while the whole flock of alarmed birds seemed, for a moment, thrown into one disorderly and agitated mass. The air was filled with their irregular flights, layer rising over layer, far above the tops of the highest pines, none daring to advance beyond the dangerous pass; when suddenly, some of the leaders of the feathered tribe shot across the valley, taking their flight directly over the village, and the hundreds of thousands in their rear followed their example, deserting the eastern side of the plain to their persecutors and the fallen.

"Victory!" shouted Richard, "victory! we have driven the enemy from the field."

"Not so, Dickon," said Marmaduke; "the field is covered with them; and, like the Leather-stocking, I see nothing but eyes, in every direction, as the innocent sufferers turn their heads in terror, to examine my movements. Full one half of those that have fallen

are yet alive; and I think it is time to end the sport, if sport it be."

"Sport!" cried the Sheriff; "it is princely sport. There are some thousands of the blue-coated boys on the ground, so that every old woman in the village may have a pot-pie for the asking."

"Well, we have happily frightened the birds from this pass," said Marmaduke, "and our carnage must of necessity end, for the present. Boys, I will give thee sixpence a hundred for the pigeons' heads only; so go to work, and bring them into the village, when I will pay thee."

This expedient produced the desired effect, for every urchin on the ground went industriously to work to wring the necks of the wounded birds. Judge Temple retired towards his dwelling with that kind of feeling, that many a man has experienced before him, who discovers, after the excitement of the moment has passed, that he has purchased pleasure at the price of misery to others.—Horses were loaded with the dead; and, after this first burst of sporting, the shooting of pigeons became a business, for the re-

mainder of the season, more in proportion to the wants of the people. Richard, however, boasted for many a year, of his shot with the "cricket;" and Benjamin gravely asserted, that he thought that they killed nearly as many pigeons on that day, as there were Frenchmen destroyed on the memorable occasion of Rodney's victory.

CHAPTER XI.

"Help, masters, help; here's a fish hangs in the net, like a poor man's right in the law."

Pericles of Tyre.

The advance of the season now became as rapid, as its first approach had been tedious and lingering. The days were uniformly mild, and genial to vegetation, while the nights, though cool, were no longer chilled by frosts. The whip-poor-will was heard whistling his melancholy notes along the margin of the lake, and the ponds and meadows were sending forth the music of their thousand tenants. The leaf of the native poplar was seen quivering in the woods; the sides of the mountains began to lose their hue of brown, as the lively green of the different members of the forest blended their shades with the permanent colours of the pine and hemlock; and even the buds of the tardy oak were swelling with the promise of the coming summer. The gay and fluttering

blue-bird, the social robin, and the industrious little wren, were all to be seen, enlivening the fields with their presence and their sôngs; while the soaring fish-hawk was already hovering over the waters of Otsego, watching, with his native voracity, for the appearance of his prey.

The tenants of the lake were far-famed for both their quantities and their quality, and the ice had hardly disappeared, before numberless little boats were launched from the shores, and the lines of the fishermen were dropped into the inmost recesses of its deepest caverns, tempting the unwary animals with every variety of bait, that the ingenuity or the art of man had invented. But the slow, though certain adventures with a hook and line were ill-suited to the profusion and impatience of the settlers. More destructive means were resorted to; and, as the season had now arrived when the bass-fisheries were allowed by the provisions of the law, that Judge Temple had procured, the Sheriff declared his intention by availing himself of the first dark night, to enjoy the sport in person—

" And you shall be present, cousin Bess," he added, when he announced this intention, " and Miss Grant, and Mr. Edwards; and I will show you what I call fishing—not nibble, nibble, nibble, as 'duke does, when he goes after the salmon-trout. There he will sit, for hours, in a broiling sun, or, perhaps, over a hole in the ice, in the coldest days in winter, under the lee of a few bushes, and not a fish will he catch, after all this mortification of the flesh. No, no—give me a good seine, that's fifty or sixty fathoms in length, with a jolly parcel of boatmen to crack their jokes, the while, and with Benjamin to steer, and let us haul them in by thousands, and I shall call that fishing."

" Ah! Dickon," cried Marmaduke, " thou knowest but little of the pleasure there is in playing with the hook and line, or thou wouldst be more saving of the game. I have known thee to leave fragments enough behind thee, when thou hast headed a night-party on the lake, to feed a half-dozen famishing families."

" I shall not dispute the matter with you, Judge Temple," said the Sheriff, with much

dignity; "this night will I go; and I invite the company to attend, and then let them decide between us."

Richard was busy, during most of the afternoon, making his preparations for the important occasion. Just as the light of the setting sun had disappeared, and a new moon had begun to cause faint shadows to be seen on the earth, the fishermen took their departure in a boat, for a point that was situated on the western shore of the lake, at the distance of rather more than half a mile from the village. The ground had become settled, and the walking was good and dry. Marmaduke, with his daughter, her friend, and young Edwards, continued on the high, grassy bank, at the outlet of the placid sheet of water, watching the dark object that was moving with great rapidity across the lake, until it entered the shade of the western hills, and was lost to the eye. The distance round by land, to the point of their destination, was a mile, and he observed—

"It is time for us to be moving; the moon will be down ere we reach the point, and

then the miraculous hauls of Dickon will commence."

The evening was warm, and, after the long and dreary winter they had just escaped from, delightfully invigorating, both to the mind and body. Inspirited with the scene, and their anticipated amusement, the youthful companions of the Judge followed his steps, as he led them along the shores of the Otsego, and through the skirts of the little village.

"See!" said young Edwards; "they are building their fire already; it glimmers for a moment, and then dies again, like the light of a fire-fly."

"Now it blazes like a bonfire!" cried Elizabeth; "you can see the figures moving around the light. Oh! I would bet my box of jewels against the gold beads of Remarkable, that my impatient cousin Dickon had an agency in raising that bright flame;—and see; it begins to fade again, like most of his brilliant schemes."

"Thou hast guessed the truth, Bess," said her father; "he has thrown an armful of

brush on the pile, and it has burnt out as soon as lighted. But it has enabled them to find a better fuel, for their fire begins to blaze with a more steady flame. It is the true fisherman's beacon now; observe how beautifully it throws its little circle of light on the water."

The appearance of the fire urged the pedestrians on, for even the ladies had become eager to witness the draught of the seine. By the time they reached the bank which rose above the low point, where the fishermen had landed, the moon had sunk behind the tops of the western pines, and, as most of the stars were obscured by the clouds, there was but little other light, by which to view the scene, than that which proceeded from the large piles of brush, branches, and roots, that had been collected, under the superintendence of Richard. At the suggestion of Marmaduke, his companions paused to listen to the conversation of those below them, and examine the party, for a moment, before they descended to the shore.

The whole group were seated around the fire, on the ground, with the exception of

Richard and Benjamin; the former of whom occupied the root of a decayed stump, that had been drawn to the spot as part of their fuel, and the latter was standing, with his arms a-kimbo, so near to the flame, that the smoke occasionally obscured his solemn visage, as it waved around the pile, in obedience to the light night-airs, that swept gently over the surface of the water.

"Why, look you, Squire," said the Major-domo, "you may call a lake-fish that will weigh twenty or thirty pounds a serious matter; but to a man who has hauled in a shovel-nosed shirk, d'ye see, it's but a poor kind of fishing, after all."

"I don't know, Benjamin," returned the Sheriff; "a haul of one thousand Otsego bass, without counting pike, pickerel, perch, bull-pouts, salmon-trouts, and suckers, is no bad fishing, let me tell you. There may be sport in sticking a shark, but what is he good for after you have got him? now any one of the fish that I have named is fit to set before a king."

"Well, Squire," returned Benjamin, "just listen to the philosophy of the thing. Would

it stand to reason, that such fish should live and be catched in this here little pond of water, where it's hardly deep enough to drown a man, as you'll find in the wide ocean, where, as every body knows, that is, every body that has followed the seas, whales and grampuses are to be seen, that are as long as one of them pine trees on yonder mountain?"

"Softly, softly, Benjamin," said the Sheriff, using a soothing manner, as if he wished to save the credit of his favourite; "why some of the pines will measure full two hundred feet, and even more."

"Two hundred or two thousand, it's all the same thing," cried Benjamin, with an air which manifested that he was not easily to be bullied out of his opinion, on a subject like the present—"Haven't I been there, and haven't I seen? I have said that you fall in with whales as long as one of them there pines; and I'll stand to what I have once said."

During this dialogue, which was evidently but the close of a much longer discussion, the huge frame of Billy Kirby was seen ex-

tended, along, on one side of the fire, where he was picking his teeth with the splinters of the chips that were near him, and occasionally shaking his head, with the distrust that was engendered by the marvellous qualities of Benjamin's assertions. It seems that he now thought it time to advance his sentiments on the subject.

"I've a notion," said the wood-chopper, "that there's water in this lake to swim the biggest whale that ever was invented; and, as to the pines, I think I ought to know so'thing consarning them; and I have chopped many a one that was sixty times the length of my helve, without counting the eye; and I b'lieve, Benny, that if the old pine that stands in the hollow of the Vision Mountain, just over the village, and you may see the tree itself by looking up, for the moon is on its top yet;—well, now I b'lieve, that if that same tree was planted out in the deepest part of the lake, there would be water enough for the biggest ship that ever was built to float over it, without touching its upper branches, I do."

"Did'ee ever see a ship, Master Kirby?"

roared the steward—"did'ee ever see a ship, man? or any craft bigger than a lime-scow, or a wood-boat, on this here small bit of fresh water?"

"Yes, I have," said the wood-chopper, stoutly; "I can say that I have, and tell no lie."

"Did'ee ever see a British ship, Master Kirby? an English line-of-battle ship, boy? Where away did'ee ever fall in with a regular-built vessel, with starn-post and cutwater, garboard streak and plank-shear, gangways and hatchways, and waterways, quarter-deck and forecastle, ay, and flush-deck?—tell me that, man, if you can; where away did'ee ever fall in with such a hooker; a full-rigged, regular-built, decked vessel?"

The whole company were a good deal astounded with this overwhelming question, and even Richard afterwards remarked, that it "was a thousand pities that Benjamin could not read, or he must have made a valuable officer to the British marine. It was no wonder that they overcome the French so easily on the water, when even the lowest

sailor so well understood the different parts of a vessel." But Billy Kirby was a fearless wight, and had great jealousy of foreign dictation; he had arisen on his feet, and turned his back to the fire, during the voluble delivery of this interrogatory, and when the steward had ended, contrary to all expectation, he gave the following spirited reply:—

"Where! why on the North River, and maybe on Champlain. There's sloops on the river, boy, that would give a hard time on't to the stoutest vessel King George owns. They carry masts of ninety feet in the clear, of good, solid pine, for I've been at the chopping of many a one in Varmount state. I wish I was captain of one of them, and you was in that Board-dish that you tell so much about, and we'd soon see what good Yankee stuff is made on, and whether a Varmounter's hide an't as thick as an Englishman's."

The echoes from the opposite hills, which were more than half a mile from the fishing point, sent back the discordant laugh that Benjamin gave forth at this challenge; and

the woods that covered their sides, seemed, by the noise that issued from their shades, to be full of mocking demons."

"Let us descend to the shore," whispered Marmaduke, "or there will soon be ill blood between them. Benjamin is a fearless boaster, and Kirby, though a good-natured, is a careless son of the forest, who thinks one American more than a match for six Englishmen. I marvel that Dickon is silent, where there is such a trial of skill in the superlative!"

The appearance of Judge Temple and the ladies produced, if not a pacification, at least a cessation of hostilities. Obedient to the directions of Mr. Jones, the fishermen prepared to launch their boat, which had been seen in the back-ground of the view, with the net carefully disposed on a little platform in its stern, ready for instant service. Richard gave vent to his reproaches at the tardiness of the pedestrians, when all the turbulent passions of the party were succeeded by a calm, as mild and as placid as that which prevailed over the beautiful sheet

of water, that they were about to rifle of its best treasures.

The night had now become so dark as to render objects, without the reach of the light from their fire, not only indistinct, but, in most cases, invisible. For a little distance the water was discernible, glistening, as the glare from the fire danced over its surface, touching it, here and there, with red, quivering streaks; but at a hundred feet from the shore, a boundary of impenetrable gloom opposed itself to the vision. One or two stars were shining through the openings of the clouds, and the lights were seen in the village, glimmering faintly, as if at an immeasurable distance. At times, as their fire lowered, or as the horizon cleared, the outline of the mountain, on the other side of the lake, might be traced for moments, by its undulations; but its shadow was cast, wide and dense, on the bosom of the waters, rendering the darkness, in that direction, trebly deep.

Benjamin Pump was invariably the cockswain and net-caster of Richard's boat, unless the Sheriff saw fit to preside in person; and,

on the present occasion, Billy Kirby, and a youth of about half his strength, were assigned to the duty at the oars. The remainder of the assistants were to be stationed at the ropes, for the laborious service of hauling the net to land. The arrangements were speedily made, and Richard gave the signal to "shove off."

Elizabeth watched the motion of the batteau, as it pulled from the shore, letting loose its rope as it went, but it very soon disappeared in the darkness, when her ear was her only guide to its evolutions. There was a great affectation of stillness, during all these manœuvres, in order, as Richard assured them, "not to frighten the bass, who were running into the shoal waters, and who would approach the light, if not disturbed by the sounds from the fishermen."

The hoarse voice of Benjamin was alone heard, issuing out of the gloom, as he uttered, in authoritative tones, "pull larboard oar," "pull starboard," "give way together, boys," and such other dictative mandates as were necessary for the right disposition of his seine. A long time was passed in this neces-

sary part of the process, for Benjamin prided himself greatly on his skill in throwing his net, and, in fact, most of the success of the sport depended on its being done with judgment. At length a loud plash in the water, as he threw away the " staff," or " stretcher," with a hoarse call from the steward, of " clear," announced that the boat was returning to the shore; when Richard seized a brand from the fire, and ran to a point, as far above the centre of the fishing ground, as the one from which the batteau had started was below it.

" Stick her in dead for the Squire, boys," said the steward, " and we'll have a look at what there is that grows in this here pond."

In place of the falling net, were now to be heard the quick stroke of the oars, and the noise of the rope, as it run out of the boat. Presently the batteau shot into the circle of light, and in an instant she was pulled to shore. Several eager hands were extended, to receive the " hauling line," and, both ropes being equally well manned, the fishermen commenced hauling in, with slow and steady drags, Richard standing in the centre, giving

orders, first to one party and then to the other, to increase or slacken their efforts, as the occasion required. The visitors were posted near him, so as to enjoy a fair view of the whole operation, which was slowly advancing to an end.

Opinions, as to the result of their adventure, were now freely hazarded by all the men, some declaring that the net came in as light as a feather, and others affirming that it seemed to be full of logs. As the ropes were many hundred feet in length, these opposing sentiments were thought to be of little moment by the Sheriff, who would go first to one line and then to the other, giving each a small pull, by the way of enabling him to make up an opinion for himself.

"Why, Benjamin," he cried, as he made his first effort in this way, "you did not throw your net clear. I can move it with my little finger. The rope slackens in my hand."

"Did you ever see a whale, Squire?" responded the steward: "I say that if that there net is foul, the devil is in the lake in the shape of a fish, for I cast it as fair as ever rigging was rove over the quarter-deck of a flag-ship."

But Richard soon discovered his mistake, by observing Billy Kirby before him, standing with his feet to the water, at an angle of forty-five degrees, inclining shorewards, and expending his gigantic strength in sustaining himself in that posture; when he ceased his remonstrances, and proceeded to the party at the other line.

"I see the 'staffs,'" shouted Mr. Jones;—"gather in, boys, and away with it; to shore with her—to shore with her."

At this cheerful sound, Elizabeth strained her eyes, and saw the ends of the two sticks on the seine, just emerging from the darkness, while the men closed so near to each other, as to form a deep bag of their net. The exertions of the fishermen now sensibly increased, and the voice of Richard was heard, encouraging them to make their greatest efforts, at the present moment.

"Now's the time, my lads," he cried; "let us get the ends to land, and all we have will be our own—away with her!"

"Away with her it is," echoed Benjamin—"hurrah! ho-a-hoy, ho-a-hoy, ho-a!"

"In with her," shouted Kirby, exerting himself in a manner that left nothing for those

in his rear to do, but to gather up the slack of the rope which he passed through his hands.

"Staff, ho!" cried the steward.

"Staff, ho!" echoed Kirby, from the other rope.

The men now all rushed to the water's edge, some seizing the upper rope, and some the lower, or lead rope, and began to haul with great activity and zeal. A deep semicircular sweep, of the little balls that supported the seine in its perpendicular position, was plainly visible to the spectators, and, as it rapidly lessened in size, the bag of the net appeared, while an occasional flutter on the water, announced the uneasiness of the prisoners it contained.

"Haul in, my lads," shouted Richard—"I can see the dogs kicking to get free. Haul in, and here's a cast that will pay you for the labour."

Fishes of various sorts now were to be seen, entangled in the meshes of the net, as it was passed through the hands of the labourers, and the water, at a little distance from the shore, was alive with the agitated move-

ments of the alarmed victims. Hundreds of white sides were glancing up to the surface of the water, and glistening in the fire-light, when, frightened at the uproar and the change, the fish would again dart to the bottom, in fruitless efforts for freedom.

"Hurrah!" shouted Richard again; "one or two more heavy drags, boys, and we are safe."

"Cheerily, boys, cheerily!" cried Benjamin; "I see a salmon-trout that is big enough for a chowder."

"Away with you, you varmint!" said Billy Kirby, plucking a bull-pout from the meshes, and casting the animal back into the lake with great contempt. "Pull, boys, pull; here's all kinds, and the Lord condemn me for a liar, if there an't a thousand bass!"

Inflamed beyond the bounds of discretion at the sight, and forgetful of the season, the wood-chopper rushed up to his middle in the water, and begun to drive the reluctant animals before him from their native element.

"Pull heartily, boys," cried Marmaduke, yielding to the excitement of the moment, and laying his hands to the net, with no trifling

addition to the force. Young Edwards had already preceded him, for the sight of the immense piles of fish, that were slowly rolling over on the gravelly beach, had impelled him also to leave the ladies, and join the fishermen.

Great care was observed in bringing the net to land, and, after much toil, the whole shoal of victims were safely deposited in a hollow of the bank, where they were left to flutter away their brief existence, in their new and fatal element.

Even Elizabeth and Louisa were greatly excited and highly gratified, by seeing two thousand captives thus drawn from out of the bosom of the lake, and laid as prisoners at their feet. But when the feelings of the moment were passing away, Marmaduke took in his hands a bass, that might have weighed two pounds, and, after viewing it a moment, in melancholy musing, he turned to his daughter, and observed—

"This is a fearful expenditure of the choicest gifts of Providence. These fish, Bess, which thou seest lying in such piles before thee, and which, by to-morrow evening, will be rejected food on the meanest table in

Templeton, are of a quality and flavour that, in other countries, would make them esteemed as a luxury on the tables of princes or epicures. The world has no better fish than the bass of Otsego: it unites the richness of the shad to the firmness of the salmon."

"But surely, dear sir," cried Elizabeth, "they must prove a great blessing to the country, and a powerful friend to the poor."

"The poor are always prodigal, my child, where there is plenty, and seldom think of a provision against the morrow. But if there can be any excuse for destroying animals in this manner, it is in taking the bass. During the winter, you know, they are entirely protected from our assaults by the ice, for they always refuse the hook; and during the hot months, they are never seen. It is supposed they retreat to the deep and cool waters of the lake, at that season; and it is only in the spring and autumn, that, for a few days, they are to be found, around the points where they are within the reach of a seine. But, like all the other treasures of the wilderness, they begin already to disappear, before the wasteful extravagance of man."

"Disappear, 'duke! disappear!" exclaimed the Sheriff; "if you don't call this appearing, I do not know what you will. Here are a good thousand of the shiners, some hundreds of suckers, and a powerful quantity of other fry. But this is always the way with you, Marmaduke; first it's the trees, then it's the deer, after that it's the maple sugar, and so on to the end of the chapter. One day, you talk of canals, through a country where there's a river or a lake every half-mile, just because the water won't run the way you wish it to go; and the next, you say something about mines of coal, though any man who has good eyes, like myself—I say with good eyes—can see more wood than would keep the city of London in fuel for fifty years;—wouldn't it, Benjamin?"

"Why, for that, Squire," said the steward, "Lon'on is no small place. If it was stretched an end, all the same as a town on one side of a river, it would cover some such matter as this here lake. Thof I dar'st to say, that the wood in sight might sarve them a good turn, seeing that the Lon'oners mainly burn coal."

" Now we are on the subject of coal, Judge Temple," interrupted the Sheriff, " I have a thing of much importance to communicate to you ; but I will defer it until to-morrow. I know that you intend riding into the western part of the patent, and I will accompany you, and conduct you to a spot, where some of your projects may be realized. We will say no more, now, sir, for there are listeners ; but a secret has this evening been revealed to me, 'duke, that is of more consequence to your welfare, than all your estates united."

Marmaduke laughed at this important intelligence, to which he was, in a variety of shapes, accustomed, and the Sheriff, with an air of great dignity, as if pitying his want of faith, proceeded in the business more immediately before them. As the labour of drawing the net had been very great, he directed one party of his men to commence throwing the fish into piles, preparatory to the usual division, while another, under the superintendence of Benjamin, prepared the seine for a second haul.

CHAPTER XII.

> "While from its margin, terrible to tell!
> Three sailors with their gallant boatswain fell."
>
> *Falconer.*

While the fishermen were employed in making the preparations for an equitable division of their spoils, Elizabeth and her friend strolled to a short distance from the group, along the shores of the lake. The shades of evening had been gradually gathering around the scene, during the draught of the net, and, while the objects in the vicinity of the fire were still distinct, and even vivid, the surrounding darkness became deeper, both by the contrast, and the advancing dominion of the night. After reaching a point, to which even the brightest of the occasional gleams of light from the fire did not extend, the ladies turned, and paused a moment, in silent contemplation of the busy and lively party they

had left, and of the obscurity, which, like the gloom of oblivion, seemed to envelope the rest of the creation.

"This is indeed a subject for the pencil," exclaimed Elizabeth. "Observe the countenance of that wood-chopper, as he exults in presenting a larger fish than common to my cousin Sheriff; and see, Louisa, how handsome and considerate my dear father looks, by the light of that fire, where he stands viewing the havoc of the game. He seems really melancholy, as if he actually thought that a day of retribution was to follow this hour of abundance and prodigality! Would they not make a fine picture, Louisa?"

"You know that I am ignorant of all such accomplishments, Miss Temple."

"Call me by my christian name," interrupted Elizabeth; "this is not a place, neither is this a scene, for the observance of such forms."

"Well, then, if I may venture an opinion," said Louisa, timidly, "I should think it might indeed make a picture. The selfish earnestness of that Kirby over his fish, would contrast finely with the—the—expression of

Mr. Edwards' face. I hardly know what to call it; but it is—a—is—you know what I would say, dear Elizabeth."

"You do me too much credit, Miss Grant," said the heiress; "I am no diviner of thoughts, or interpreter of expressions."

There was certainly nothing harsh, or even cold, in the manner of the speaker, but still it repressed the conversation, for a moment, and the maidens continued to stroll still further from their party, retaining each other's arm, but observing a profound silence. Elizabeth, perhaps conscious of an improper phraseology in her last speech, or perhaps excited by the new object that met her wandering gaze, was the first to break the present awkward cessation in the discourse, by exclaiming, in all the richness of her animated and animating voice—

"Look, Louisa! we are not alone; there are fishermen lighting a fire on the other side of the lake, immediately opposite to us: it must be in front of the cabin of the Leather-stocking!"

For some cause or other, Miss Grant had kept her eyes bent in the direction of the peb-

bles, over which she was walking; probably because, being less adventurous than her companion, she was disposed to view what could be faintly discerned, without attempting the gloom, in a vain effort to pierce its mysteries; or probably for some better reason, that we leave our readers to imagine; but thus awakened, she looked up, in the direction pointed out by her friend, and saw, at once, the cause of her sudden exclamation.

Through the obscurity, which prevailed most, immediately under the eastern mountain, a small and uncertain light was plainly to be seen, though, as it was occasionally lost to the eye, it seemed struggling for its existence. They observed it to move, and sensibly to lower, as if carried down the descent of the bank on to the shore. Here, in a very short time, its flame gradually expanded, and grew brighter, until it became of the size, apparently, of a man's head, when it continued to shine, a steady and glaring ball of fire.

Such an object, lighted as it were by magic, under the brow of the mountain, and in that retired and unfrequented place, gave double

interest to the beauty and singularity of its appearance. It did not at all resemble the large and unsteady light of their own fire, being much more clear and bright, and retaining its size and shape with perfect uniformity.

There are moments when the best regulated minds are, more or less, subjected to the injurious impressions, which few have escaped in infancy, and Elizabeth smiled at her own weakness, while she remembered the idle tales, which were circulated through the village, at the expense of the Leather-stocking. The same ideas seized her companion, and at the same instant, for Louisa pressed nearer to her friend, as she said, in a low voice, stealing a timid glance towards the bushes and trees that overhung the bank near them—

“ Did you ever hear the singular ways of this Natty spoken of, Miss Temple? They say that, in his youth, he was an Indian warrior, or, what is the same thing, a white man leagued with the savages; and it is thought that he has been concerned in many of their inroads, in the old wars.”

" The thing is not at all improbable," returned Elizabeth; " but he is not alone in that particular."

" No, surely; but is it not strange, that he is so cautious with his hut? he never leaves it, without fastening it in a remarkable manner; and, in several instances, when the children, or even the men of the village have wished to seek a shelter there from the storms, he has been known to drive them from his door, with rudeness and threats. That surely is singular in this country."

" It is certainly not being very hospitable; but we must remember his aversion to the customs of civilized life. You heard my father say, a few days since, how kindly he was treated by him, on his first visit to this place." Elizabeth paused, and smiled, with an expression of marked singularity, though the darkness hid its meaning from her companion, as she continued:—" Besides, he certainly admits the visits of Mr. Edwards, whom we both know to be far from a savage."

To this speech Louisa made no reply, but continued gazing on the object which had elicited her remarks. In addition to the

bright and circular flame, was now to be seen a fainter, though a vivid light, of an equal diameter to the other at the upper end, but which, after extending, downward, for many feet, gradually tapered to a point at its lower extremity. A dark space was plainly visible between the two, and this new illumination was placed beneath the other, the whole forming an appearance not unlike an inverted note of admiration. It was soon evident that the latter was nothing but the reflection from the water of the former, and that the object, whatever it might be, was advancing across, or rather over the lake, for it seemed to be several feet above its surface, in a direct line with themselves. Its motion was amazingly rapid, the ladies having hardly discovered that it was moving at all, before the waving light of a flame was discerned, losing its regular shape, while it increased in size, as it approached them.

"It appears to be supernatural!" whispered Louisa, beginning to retrace her steps towards the party.

"It is beautiful!" exclaimed Elizabeth.

A brilliant, though waving flame was now

plainly visible, gracefully gliding over the lake, and throwing its light on the water, in such a manner as to tinge it slightly; though, in the air, so strong was the contrast, the darkness seemed to have the distinctness of material substances, as if the fire were embedded in a setting of ebony. This appearance, however, gradually wore off, and the rays from the torch struck out, so as to enlighten the surrounding atmosphere in front of it, leaving the back-ground in a darkness that was as impenetrable as ever.

"Ho! Natty, is that you?" shouted the Sheriff—"paddle in, old boy, and I'll give you a mess of fish that is fit to place before the Governor."

The light suddenly changed its direction, and a long and slightly-built boat hove up out of the gloom, while the red glare fell on the weather-beaten features of the Leather-stocking, whose tall person was seen erect in the frail vessel, wielding, with all the grace of an experienced boatman, a long fishing-spear, which he held by its centre, first dropping one end and then the other into the water, to aid in propelling the little canoe of

bark, we will not say through, but over the water. At the farther end of the vessel, a form was faintly seen, guiding its motions, and using a paddle with the ease of one who felt there was no necessity for extraordinary exertions. The Leather-stocking struck his spear lightly against the short staff which upheld, over the bow of his canoe, on a rude grating framed of old hoops of iron, the knots of pine that composed the fuel of his fire; and the light, which glared high, for an instant fell on the swarthy features, and dark, glancing eyes of Mohegan.

The boat glided along the shore until it arrived opposite to the fishing-ground, when it again changed its direction, and moved on to the land, with a motion so graceful, and yet so rapid, that it seemed to possess the power of regulating its progress by its own volition. The water, in front of the canoe, was hardly ruffled by its passage, and no sound betrayed the collision, when the light fabric shot on to the gravelly beach, for nearly half of its length, Natty receding a step or two from its bow, in order to facilitate its landing.

"Approach, Mohegan," said Marmaduke; "approach, Leather-stocking, and load your canoe with the bass. It would be a shame to assail the animals with the spear, when such multitudes of victims lie here, that will be lost as food, for the want of mouths to consume them."

"No, no, Judge," returned Natty, as his tall figure stalked over the narrow beach, and ascended to the little grassy bottom where the fish were laid in piles; "I eat of no man's wasty ways. I strike my spear into the eels, or the trout, when I crave the creaters, but I wouldn't be helping to such a sinful kind of fishing, for the best rifle that was ever brought out from the old countries. If they had fur, like a beaver, or you could tan their hides, like a buck, something might be said in favour of taking them by the thousands with your nets; but as God made them for man's food, and for no other disarnable reason, I call it sinful and wasty to catch more than can be eat."

"Your reasoning is mine," cried Marmaduke; "for once, old hunter, we agree in our opinions; and I heartily wish we could

make a convert of the Sheriff. A net of half the size of this would supply the whole village with fish, for a week, at one haul."

The Leather-stocking did not seem to relish this alliance in sentiment, for he shook his head doubtingly, as he answered—

"No, no; we are not much of one mind, Judge, or you'd never turn good hunting grounds into stumpy pastures. And you fish and hunt out of rule; but to me, the flesh is sweeter, where the creater has some chance for its life; and for that reason, I always use a single ball, even if it be at a bird or a squirrel; besides, it saves lead, for, when a body knows how to shoot, one piece of lead is enough for all, except hard-lived animals."

The Sheriff heard these opinions with great indignation; and when he completed the last arrangement for the division, by carrying, with his own hands, a trout of a large size, and placing it on four different piles in succession, as his changeful ideas of justice required, he gave vent to his spleen by exclaiming—

"A very pretty confederacy, indeed! Judge Temple, the landlord and owner of a town-

ship, with Nathaniel Bumppo, a lawless squatter, and professed deer-killer, in order to preserve the game in the county! But 'duke, when I fish, I fish, and don't play in the matter;—so, away, boys, for another haul, and we'll send out waggons and carts, in the morning, to bring in our prizes!"

Marmaduke appeared to understand that all opposition to the will of the Sheriff would be useless, and he wandered from the fire, to the place where the canoe of the hunters lay, whither the ladies and Oliver Edwards had already preceded him.

Curiosity induced the females to approach this spot, but it surely was a different motive that led the youth thither. Elizabeth examined the light ash timbers, and thin bark covering to the canoe, with admiration of its neat but simple execution, and with wonder, that any human being could be so daring as to trust his life in so frail a vessel. But the youth explained to her the buoyant properties of the boat, and its perfect safety, when under proper management, adding, in such glowing terms, a description of the manner in which the fish were struck with the spear, that she

changed, suddenly, from an apprehension of the danger of the excursion, to a desire to participate in its pleasures. She even ventured a proposition to that effect to her father, laughing, at the same time, at her own wish, and accusing herself of acting under a woman's caprice.

"Say not so, Bess," returned the Judge; "I would have you above the idle fears of a silly girl. These canoes are the safest kind of boats, to those who have skill and steady nerves. I have crossed the broadest part of the Oneida in one much smaller than this."

"And I the Ontary," interrupted the Leather-stocking; "and that with squaws in the canoe, too. But the Delaware women are used to the paddle, and are down good hands in a boat of this nater. If the young woman would like to see an old man strike a trout for his breakfast, she is welcome to a seat and a sight. John will say the same, seeing that he built the canoe, which was only launched yesterday; for I'm not over curous at such small work as brooms, and basket-making, and other like Indian trades."

Natty gave the heiress one of his signifi-

cant laughs, with a kind nod of his head, when he concluded this invitation; but Mohegan, with the native grace of an Indian, approached, and taking her soft, white hand into his own swarthy and wrinkled palm, said—

" Come, grand-daughter of Miquon, and John will be glad. Trust the Indian: his head is old, though his hand is not steady. The young Eagle will go, and see that no harm hurts his sister."

" Well, Mr. Edwards," cried Elizabeth, blushing slightly, " your friend, Mohegan, you see, has given a promise for you. Do you redeem the pledge?"

" With my life, if necessary, Miss Temple," cried the youth, with fervour. " The sight is worth some little apprehension, for of real danger there is none. I will go with you and Miss Grant, however, to save appearances."

" With me!" exclaimed Louisa; " no, not with me, Mr. Edwards; nor surely do you mean to trust yourself in that slight canoe."

" But I will, for I have no apprehensions any longer," said Elizabeth, stepping into the boat, and taking a seat where the Indian

directed. " Mr. Edwards, you may remain, as three do seem to be enough for such an egg-shell."

" It shall hold a fourth," cried the young man, springing to her side, with a violence that nearly shook the weak fabric of the vessel asunder;--" pardon me, Miss Temple, that I do not permit these venerable Charons to take you to the shades, unattended by your genius."

" Is it a good or evil spirit?" asked Elizabeth.

" Good to you."

" And mine," added the maiden, with an air that strangely blended pique with satisfaction. But the motion of the canoe gave rise to new ideas, and fortunately afforded a good excuse to the young man to change the discourse.

It appeared to Elizabeth, that they glided over the water as if by magic, so easy and graceful was the manner in which Mohegan guided his little bark. A slight gesture with his spear, indicated the way in which the Leather-stocking wished to go, and a profound silence was preserved by the whole

party, as a precaution necessary to the success of their fishery. The shore, at that point of the lake, ran gradually off, and the water shoaled regularly, differing, in this particular, altogether, from those parts, where the mountains rose, nearly in perpendicular precipices, from the beach. There, the largest vessels could have lain, with their yards locked in the branches of the pines; while here, a scanty growth of rushes lifted their tops above the lake, gently curling the waters, as their bending heads slowly waved with the passing breath of the night air. It was at the shallow points, only, that the bass could be found, or the net cast with success.

Elizabeth saw thousands of these fish swimming in shoals along the shallow and warm waters of the shore; for the flaring light of their torches exposed all the mysteries of the lake, laying them open to the eye, with the slight variation of colour, as plainly as if the limpid sheet of Otsego was but another atmosphere. Every instant she expected to see the impending spear of Leatherstocking darting into the thronging hosts that were rushing beneath her, where it would

seem that a blow could not go amiss; and where, as her father had already said, the prize that would be obtained was worthy of the notice of any epicure. But Natty had his peculiar habits; and, it would seem, his peculiar tastes also. His tall stature, and his erect posture, enabled him to see much farther than those who were, from motives of safety, seated in the bottom of the canoe; and he turned his head warily, in every direction, frequently bending his body forward, and straining his vision, as if desirous of penetrating the darkness in the water, that surrounded their boundary of light. At length his anxious scrutiny was rewarded with success, and, waving his spear from the shore, he said, in a cautious tone—

"Send her outside the bass, John; I see a laker there, that has run out of the school. It's sildom one finds such a creater in the shallow waters, where a spear can touch it."

Mohegan gave a wave of assent with his hand, and in the next instant the canoe was without the "run of the bass," and in water of nearly twenty feet in depth. A few additional knots were laid on the grating, and the

light from the fire made to reach the bottom. There, Elizabeth saw a fish of unusual size floating above the small pieces of logs and sticks, that were lying on the bottom. The animal was only distinguishable, at that distance, by a slight, and almost imperceptible motion of its fins and tail. The curiosity excited by this unusual exposure of the secrets of the lake, seemed to be mutual between the heiress of the land and the lord of these waters, for the "salmon-trout" soon announced his interest, by raising his head and body, for a few degrees above a horizontal line, and then dropping them again into the position of nature.

"Whist, whist," said Natty, in a low voice, on hearing a slight sound made by Elizabeth, in bending over the side of the canoe, in eager curiosity; "'tis a scary animal, and it's a far stroke for a spear. My handle is but fourteen foot, and the creater lies at a good eighteen from the top of the water; but I'll try him, for he's a ten-pounder."

While speaking, the Leather-stocking was poising and directing his weapon. Elizabeth saw the bright, polished tines, as they slowly

and silently entered the water, where the refraction pointed them many degrees from the true direction to the fish; and she thought that the intended victim saw them also, as he seemed to increase the play of his tail and fins, though without moving his station. At the next instant, the tall body of Natty bent to the water's edge, and the handle of his spear disappeared in the lake. The long, dark streak of the gliding weapon, and the little bubbling vortex, which followed its rapid flight, were easily to be seen; but it was not until the handle shot again high into the air, by its own re-action, and its master, catching it in his hand, threw its tines uppermost, that Elizabeth was acquainted with the success of the blow. A fish of great size was transfixed by the barbed steel, and was very soon shaken from its impaled situation into the bottom of the canoe."

"That will do, John," said Natty, raising his prize by one of his fingers, and exhibiting it before the torch; "enough is as good as a feast; I shall not strike another blow to-night."

The Indian again waved his hand, and

replied with the simple and energetic monosyllable of—" Good."

Elizabeth was awakened from the trance, created by this scene, and by gazing in that unusual manner at the bottom of the lake, by the hoarse sounds of Benjamin's voice, and the dashing of oars, as the heavier boat of the seine-drawers approached the spot where the canoe lay, dragging after its toilsome way, the folds of the net, which was already spreading on the water.

" Haul off, haul off, Master Bumppo," cried Benjamin; " your top-light frightens the fish, who see the net, and sheer off soundings. A fish knows as much as a horse, or, for that matter, more, seeing that it's brought up on the water. Haul off, Master Bumppo, haul off, I say, and give a wide birth to the seine."

Mohegan guided their little canoe to a point where the movements of the fishermen could be observed, without interruption to the business, and then suffered it to lie quietly on the water, looking like an imaginary vessel floating in the air. There appeared to be much ill-humour among the party in the batteau, for the directions of Benjamin were not

only frequent, but issued in a voice that partook largely of the tones of dissatisfaction.

"Pull larboard oar, will ye, Master Kirby," cried the old seaman; "pull larboard, best. It would puzzle the oldest admiral in the British fleet to cast this here net fair, with a wake like a corkscrew. Pull starboard, boy, pull starboard oar, with a will."

"Harkee, Mister Pump," said Kirby, ceasing to row, and speaking with some spirit; "I'm a man that likes civil language and decent treatment; such as is right 'twixt man and man. If you want us to go hoy, say so, and hoy I'll go, for the benefit of the company; but I'm not used to being ordered about like dumb cattle."

"Who's dumb cattle!" echoed Benjamin, fiercely, turning his forbidding face to the glare of the light from the canoe, and exhibiting every feature teeming with an expression of his disgust. "If you want to come aft and cun the boat round, come and be damned, and a pretty steerage you'll make of it too. There's but another heave of the net in the stern-sheets, and we're clear of the thing.

Give way, will ye? and shoot her ahead for a fathom or two, and if you catch me afloat again with such a horsemarine as yourself, why rate me a ship's jackass, that's all."

Probably encouraged by the prospect of a speedy termination to their labour, the wood-chopper resumed his oar, and, under the strong excitement of his feelings, gave a stroke with it, that not only cleared the boat of the net, but of the steward, at the same instant, also. Benjamin had stood on the little platform that held the seine, in the stern of the boat, and the violent whirl, occasioned by the vigour of the wood-chopper's arm, completely destroyed his balance. The position of the lights rendered objects in the batteau, distinguishable both from the canoe and the shore; and the heavy fall on the water drew all eyes to the steward, as he lay struggling, for a moment, in sight.

A loud burst of merriment, to which the lungs of Kirby contributed no small part, broke out like a chorus of laughter, and rung along the eastern mountain, in echoes, until

it died away in distant, mocking mirth, among the rocks and woods. The body of the steward was seen slowly to disappear, as was expected; but when the light waves, which had been raised by his fall, begun to sink in calmness, and the water finally closed over his head, unbroken and still, a very different feeling pervaded the spectators.

"How fare you, Benjamin?" shouted Richard from the shore.

"The dumb devil can't swim a stroke!" exclaimed Kirby, rising, and beginning to throw aside his clothes.

"Paddle up, Mohegan," cried young Edwards, "where the light will show us how he lies, and let me dive for the body."

"Oh! save him! for God's sake, save him!" exclaimed Elizabeth, bowing her head on the side of the canoe in horror.

A powerful and dexterous sweep of Mohegan's paddle sent the canoe directly over the spot, where the steward had fallen, and a loud shout from the Leather-stocking announced that he saw the body.

"Then steady the boat while I dive," again cried Edwards.

"Gently, lad, gently," said Natty; "I'll spear the creater up in half the time, and no risk to any body."

The form of Benjamin was lying, about half way to the bottom, grasping with either hand the bottoms of some broken rushes, by whose strength it was maintained in that position. The blood of Elizabeth curdled to her heart, as she saw the figure of a fellow-creature thus extended under an immense sheet of water, apparently in motion, by the undulations of the dying waves, with its face and hands, viewed by that light, and through the medium of the fluid, already coloured with livid hues like death.

At the same instant, she saw the shining tines of Natty's spear approaching the motionless head of the sufferer, and entwining themselves, rapidly and dexterously, in the hairs of his queue and the cape of his coat. The body was now raised slowly, looking ghastly and grim, as its features turned upward to the light, and approached the surface. The arrival of the nostrils of Benjamin into their own atmosphere, was announced by a breathing, that would have done credit to

a full-grown porpoise. For a moment, Natty held the steward suspended, with his head just above the water, while his eyes slowly opened, and stared about him, as if he thought that he had reached a new and unexplored country.

As all the parties acted and spoke together, much less time was consumed in the occurrence of these events, than in their narration. To bring the batteau to the end of the spear, and to raise the form of Benjamin from its liquid element into the boat, and for the whole party to gain the shore and land, required but a minute. Kirby, aided by Richard, whose anxiety induced him to run into the water to meet his favourite assistant, carried the motionless steward up the bank, and seated him before the fire, where he was supported, while the Sheriff proceeded to order the most approved measures then in use, for the resuscitation of the drowned.

" Run, Billy," he cried, " to the village, and bring up the rum-hogshead that lies before the door, in which I am making vinegar in cold weather, and be quick, boy, don't

stay to empty the vinegar; and stop at Mr. Le Quoi's, and buy a paper of tobacco and half-a-dozen pipes; and ask Remarkable for some salt, and one of her flannel petticoats; and ask Dr. Todd to send his lancet, and to come himself; and——ha! 'duke, what are you about? would you strangle a man, who is full of water, by giving him rum! Help me to open this hand, that I may pat it."

All this time Benjamin sat, with his muscles fixed, his mouth shut, and his hands clenching the rushes, which he had seized in the confusion of the moment, and which, as he held fast, like a true seaman, had been the means of preventing his body from rising again to the surface. His eyes, however, were open, and stared wildly on the group about the fire, while his lungs were playing like a blacksmith's bellows, as if to compensate themselves for the minute of inaction to which they had been subjected. As he kept his lips compressed, with a most inveterate determination, the air was compelled to pass through his nostrils, and he rather snorted than breathed, so that nothing, but the exces-

sive agitation of the Sheriff, could at all justify his precipitous orders.

The bottle, applied to the steward's lips by Marmaduke, acted like a charm. His mouth opened instinctively; his hands dropped the rushes, and seized the black glass; his eyes raised from their horizontal stare, to the heavens; and the whole man was lost, for a moment, in a new sensation. Unhappily for the propensity of the steward, breath was as necessary after one of these draughts, as after his submersion, and the time at length arrived when he was compelled to let go of the bottle.

"Why, Benjamin!" roared the Sheriff; "you amaze me! for a man of your experience in drownings to act so foolishly! just now, you were half full of water, and now you are"——

"Full of grog," interrupted the steward, his features settling down, with amazing flexibility, into their natural economy. "But, d'ye see, Squire, I kept my hatches close, and it is but little water that ever gets into my scuttle-butt.—Harkee, Master Kirby! I've follow'd the salt water for the better part of a

man's life, and have seen some navigation on the fresh; but this here matter I will say in your favour, and that is, that you're the awk'ardest green'un that ever straddled a boat's thwart. Them that likes you for a shipmate, may sail with you, and no thanks; but dam'me if I even walk on the lake shore in your company. For why? you'd as lief drown a man as one of them there fish; not to throw a christian creature so much as a rope's end, when he was adrift and no life-buoy in sight! —Natty Bumppo, give us your fist. There's them that says you're an Indian, and a scalper, but you've sarved me a good turn, and you may set me down for a friend; thof it would have been more ship-shape to lower the bight of a rope, or a running bow-line, below me, than to seize an old seaman by his head-lanyard; but I suppose you are used to taking men by the hair, and seeing you did me good instead of harm thereby, why, it's the same thing d'ye see."

Marmaduke prevented any reply, and assuming the direction of matters, with a dignity and discretion that at once silenced all

opposition from his cousin, Benjamin was despatched to the village by land, and the net was hauled to shore, in such a manner that the fish, for once, escaped its meshes with impunity.

The division of the spoils was made in the ordinary manner, by placing one of the party with his back to the game, who declared the owner of each pile. Billy Kirby stretched his large frame on the grass, by the side of the fire, as a centinel until morning, over the net and the fish; and the remainder of the party embarked in the batteau, to return to the village.

The wood-chopper was seen broiling his supper on the coals, as they lost sight of the fire; and when the boat approached the shore, the torch of Mohegan's canoe was shining under the gloom of the eastern mountain again. Its motion ceased suddenly; a scattering of brands was exhibited in the air, and then all remained dark as the conjunction of night, forests, and mountains could render the scene.

The thoughts of the heiress wandered from the youth, who was holding a canopy of

shawls over herself and Louisa, to the hunter and the Indian warrior; and she felt an awakening curiosity to visit a hut, where men of such different habits and temperament were drawn together, as if by one common impulse.

END OF VOL. II.

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